A

THE NEMESIS OF NATIONS

Augescunt aliæ gentes, aliæ minuuntur,
inque brevi spatio mutantur sæcla animantum
et quasi cursores vitai lampada tradunt.

LUCRETIUS, *De Rerum Natura, II.* 77–79.

The NEMESIS *of* NATIONS

STUDIES IN HISTORY *by*

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THE
ANCIENT WORLD

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TO

MY MOTHER

PREFACE

The author's immediate duty is to state his obligations to the work of others, and certainly it would be impossible to overstate them. The list of books placed at the end of each chapter may serve, however, to indicate the amount of the debt, for without those books the chapters could never have been written. It seems impossible to hope that no errors have accompanied the attempt to reduce so great a mass of material within the limits of this volume and to discover the truth amid accounts of it which often destroy each other. The author, therefore, will be grateful for correction in matters of detail. It seemed to him to be a legitimate method to gather together the results of investigation over a wide area, in order to make them the basis of an interpretation of human history. Juries, and even judges, before they pronounce a decision, are frequently dependent upon the evidence of experts. And the facts of history, because they are human facts, must at last be judged by the common jury of mankind. In the present instance a humble attempt is made to utilise part of the expert evidence for the purpose of forming some opinions on the life and death of nations. It need scarcely be said that the bibliographies do not cover the entire subject, but refer either to those books which are quoted in the notes or to those which the author has most frequently consulted. Except where otherwise stated, every reference has been verified. In attempting to portray the vital world which lies behind Oriental and classical scholarship, the writer determined, as far as possible, to see that world not so

much from the top as from underneath. There are those who, when they have been admitted into a luxuriant garden, are content to admire the wealth of blossom and of fruit. But there are others who think of the roots toiling below, unseen, unpraised, in a great struggle to win the necessary nourishment for the whole organism. All roots are grotesque, and they dwell in darkness, but they are near the sources of life. And although the roots of the early States are grotesque indeed, we shall scarcely be able to understand ancient civilisation unless we know its dark basis. That basis was slavery, and it affected fundamentally the fortunes of all the old nations. Its study, therefore, seemed to furnish some sense of the tragic unity of their destinies. Not in any abstract and preconceived principle, but in the concrete fact, expressed with Roman rigour in the Law of Rome, do we come face to face with the mechanism of their governments—"In potestate itaque dominorum sunt servi. Quæ quidem potestas juris gentium est; nam apud omnes peræque gentes animadvertere possumus, dominis in servos vitæ necisque potestatem esse, et quodcumque per servum adquiritur, id domino adquiritur"—"Slaves, therefore, are in the power of their masters, and that is in accordance with the Law of Nations. For in all nations we see that masters have the power of life and death over their slaves, and whatever the slave earns he earns for his master."[1] It is with the internal effect of this Law of Slavery which was the first "Law of Nations" that the present work chiefly deals. In another volume the author hopes to trace that gradual transformation of the world's social basis by means of which, in the Middle Ages, slavery became serfdom, and, in modern times, serfdom became poverty. Thereby we shall perhaps be able to discover the lines of connection between modern and ancient economic misery, and to contrast the ancient

[1] Institutes of Justinian, I. viii. 1.

with the modern conception of national duty towards the working class. The book takes the form of "Studies," but each "Study," since it makes a contribution to the main theme, is treated as a chapter.

The mere statistics of slavery would be in themselves barren, and would throw little light on the characteristics of the different civilisations which have been selected. The method adopted, therefore, is descriptive, and there has been presented besides in each case a rapid preliminary sketch of some of those facts and factors, political, artistic, and religious, which had organic importance in their day. The reader may reasonably ask on what principle the selection of States has been made, and why, for instance, ancient Egypt is unrepresented. Apart from the fact that the author has not been able to make any special study of industrial conditions in ancient Egypt, it may be pointed out that it is not now believed that Egyptian civilisation was independent or isolated. Egypt was partaker in a civilisation whose ramifications reach back to Asia—whence, indeed, the Egyptians had probably come. The "Egyptian basis" had other strata beneath it. We do not know how many generations of the men who laid the first rude foundations of all our human building had disappeared in the night of ages long before the date of Egypt or of Babylon. But so far as early recorded history is concerned the lines of growth and of decay are sufficiently visible in those social systems which have been selected. A reference in the fourth chapter to conditions of labour in Egypt will help, however, to emphasise the uniformity of the industrial basis of the ancient world. The writer is, of course, aware of the suspicion with which "generalisation" is regarded by the English historical school. Surely, however, Polybius was right when he said that it is the duty of the historian to construct out of the chaos of episodes a comprehensive scheme. In spite of

the method usually adopted in this country, and in spite of the "endless differences" which a great historian like Stubbs saw in the mass of facts, it is still possible to be impressed, not by the differences or by the isolation, but by the interlocking of causes and events over a wide area. We discover, in fact, among ancient States traces of constant borrowings in the region of industry, art, politics, and religion. And at least in their social basis there is a fearful monotony. To say that "perfect knowledge is independent of and even inconsistent with any generalisation at all" is to say that knowledge can never be anything but a morass of detail. It would be far truer to say that without generalisation, knowledge, if it exists at all, exists in a state of chaos. In the study of History, as in the study of Nature, some of the most impressive chapters deal with the gravitation and the fusion of forces. The present writer has ventured to gather together a few of those facts which, in his opinion, are best fitted to illuminate dark ages. But he hopes that, although the following pages present only outlines, and pretend to be nothing but the fragment of a fragment of a great subject, he may not have altogether failed to suggest a certain sense of unity in the theme.

Sincere thanks are due to the author's former teachers, Dr. Edward Caird, Master of Balliol, and Professor Gilbert Murray, for the kindness which prompted them to read the proofs and to offer advice and encouragement. Professor Murray was not always in agreement with the views expressed, and was good enough to suggest important modifications and improvements. If not all of those suggestions have been adopted, and if some errors remain, the responsibility rests entirely upon the author. To Mr. W. H. Helm and to Mr. H. N. Brailsford, M.A., cordial thanks are also due for much helpful criticism.

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THE NEMESIS OF NATIONS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The deeper our study of human history the more bewildered becomes our sense of the vast entanglement of the world's affairs. When the annals of mankind open we discover a number of communities apparently dwelling in isolation, but as we become familiar with their racial characteristics, their religions, their languages, and their laws we begin to detect signs not merely of contact but of kinship. Just as the frontier between Europe and Asia is artificial, so, many of the boundaries which divide nations and races are seen to be unreal. Long before history began to be written great racial amalgamations had occurred, and Asiatic types had appeared in Europe, and European types had appeared in Asia. Moreover, there was a time when Europe, Asia, and Africa formed a single continent. Geological evidence proves that Sicily, for instance, is part of a broken bridge which once united Africa and Europe, and that at Gibraltar the Atlantic was shut out by an isthmus. And just as the Flora of Spain betrays signs of a continuity of African vegetation, so, the presence of African skulls in the prehistoric graves of Europe

implies the primeval fusion of European and African races. These things may trouble European pride, but they rest upon scientific evidence. Many if not most of the really fundamental causes which created the whole series of historical events are thus hidden from the eye of history. Indeed, the historian is like a man who comes to a chess-board and finds that the pieces are already in position and that the game is half played. It has been said that it is not his function to trace the obscure causes of the world's present arrangement or to look into the deep sea of origins. But surely it is his duty at least to suggest the depth out of which human history comes.

2. The distribution of sea and land, the mystery of vegetation, and the nature of the landscape must never be neglected by the historian, because these things have influenced the life of man. We cannot forget that the world's scenery, the actual theatre in which man makes his appearance, continued to suffer violent changes even after he had appeared. We know that the earth's physical structure has been frequently undermined. In antiquity there was a whisper that an Atlantic race had perished and that an entire continent had been entombed. And the scientific exploration of the bed of the Atlantic has suggested that this belief may not belong, as some modern writers have supposed, to the mere region of fantasy. The fact that Sicily was broken off from Italy on one side and from Africa on the other, and that England was broken off from Europe, gives us a glimpse into some great primeval process of disruption. There are parts of the English Channel so shallow that if St. Paul's Cathedral were placed in the middle of the Straits of Dover half of the building would be visible. The sunken lines of connection lie, however, not only in the Channel but in the North Sea, which, according to

some naturalists, contains the remnants of a great forest as well as the ancient prolongation of the valley of the Rhine. But this wrenching of islands from the mainland is only part of a dynamic process which has operated throughout Nature. For Nature is fundamentally volcanic.

3. The presence of such islands as the Hebrides, the Faroes, the Azores, Rockall, Iceland, and Greenland far out in the Atlantic; the sudden variations of that sea's depth; and the discovery of volcanic ridges in its bed, do not indeed prove that the Atlantic is the tomb of a continent, but they render the suggestion less startling and fantastic. Modern soundings have confirmed the statements of old Scandinavian and Venetian sailors who spoke of submerged land lying between the 27th and 29th degrees of N. latitude and the 59th and 60th degrees of W. longitude. But the entire bed of the ocean further westward is a great landscape of valleys and high hills lying between America and Europe. In fact, both continents are only the extended summits of two plateaus which rise out of the sea. Those plateaus, however, are connected by a ridge which runs through the Atlantic, divides the northern from the southern waters, and sometimes lifts itself to within 400 fathoms of the surface. This sunken ridge, which begins at Great Britain, reappears out of the sea at the Azores, at Guiana on the north-eastern coast of South America, and at St. Paul's Rocks, and it betrays its volcanic nature in the island of Ascension, which is one of its peaks. Modern men of science have boldly announced the doctrine not merely that north-western Europe was once linked to North America, but that in the region which is now the South Atlantic land stretched between Africa and Brazil.[1] It is true that in opposition to those

[1] Neumayr, II., pp. 547 *sqq.*

naturalists who suppose that the Azores, Madeira, the Canaries, and Iceland are the fragments of the prolongation of Africa and Europe, other writers maintain that such islands are independent formations. The birth of continents is due, it is said, to elevation of the borders of the ocean's basin. And it is pointed out that that process of upheaval continues, because as late as 1811 in the Azores group a new volcanic island rose out of the sea. The volcanic process is thus creative as well as destructive. On the other hand, it is admitted that the structure of Atlantic islands like the Bermudas can be explained only by the subsidence of a sub-oceanic mountain, and that it is possible to trace the submerged connection between Australia, New Zealand, and Asia. A sunken coast-line, for instance, separates the deeper water of the West Pacific from the shallower water of the archipelagos. It might be possible, therefore, to reconcile these conflicting theories by supposing that during ages alternate elevations and subsidences were taking place over an immense area. If, for instance, the peculiar form of the promontory of Gibraltar is to be explained by a series of subsidences and elevations during which Europe was disunited, reunited, and again disunited from Africa, the same process may have taken place at different points throughout wide areas like the Atlantic and the Pacific. The southern coast of Sweden and the western coast of Greenland have been visibly subsiding during centuries, and the fjords of Norway and the firths of Scotland were once inland valleys. If it be pointed out that the bed of the ocean betrays no signs of having been a land-surface, it may be replied that sufficient time has elapsed during which vegetation could have been effaced, and rock, gravel, and sand could have been accumulated. But, as a matter of fact, submerged forests and peat-beds actually occur, and round the coasts of Devonshire

and Cornwall tracts of sunken vegetation have been discovered.

4. What is true of the Atlantic is likewise true of the Pacific. Between America and Asia, as between America and Europe, a volcanic chain lies broken. Lava and tufa have been found in the Pacific's bed. At one point of Behring Strait the distance from coast to coast is only forty-eight miles, and the view has been expressed that a continuity of land once united America and China.[1] Moreover, Polynesia is described by naturalists as "an area of subsidence," and its innumerable islands are believed to be the débris of continents.[2] This area is admitted to have an extent of at least 6000 geographical miles. Recent discoveries have confirmed the truth of Darwin's theory that every atoll is the crown of a sunken island. For instance, investigations at Funafuti, an island in the middle of the Pacific, have proved that its form is due to a subsidence which must have amounted to 877 feet.[3] But since this process has taken place throughout the Pacific a great part of its area must once have been dry land. If now we travel still westwards to the Indian Ocean we shall find reason to think that Madagascar, which is thoroughly volcanic, once belonged to a continent which united Africa and India. Its Flora and Fauna are African and Asiatic. On the one hand, the reefs and islands in the Indian Ocean connect it with Southern Asia, and on the other, a submarine volcanic chain links it to the Comoro Islands which are on the road to Africa. Here, then, we seem to detect a volcanic girdle round the world, which at various points was so violently loosened that entire continents were sundered, and were left to work out

[1] Neumayr, II., p. 535.
[2] Wallace, "Malay Archipelago," p. 455.
[3] Sollas, p. 130.

different destinies. This primeval continuity of soil, therefore, might explain why we discover resemblances between races and species geographically remote. We may then listen with less incredulity to naturalists who detect racial affinities between Papuans and African negroes, and between Malays and Chinese ; to men like Alexander von Humboldt, who believed that the Mexican calendar had an Asiatic origin ; and to modern travellers who perceive suggestive resemblances between prehistoric Mexican architecture and Tartar monuments, or who declare that a Semitic language was spoken and that gods of Asia and of Africa received primeval worship in the islands of the Pacific. History, indeed, is not called upon to explain the gaps which separate alien or allied races of men. But it is well that she should remember that during unnumbered ages vast and compulsory changes took place in the distribution of mankind. No doubt men often voluntarily separated from each other, and the different routes of their migrations created the deepest differences in physical type, in moral character, in language, and in religion. But their choice of territory was not always voluntary, and when they had fixed upon their boundaries Nature sometimes interfered and violently reshaped the map of the world. We are told, for instance, that once Europe and Asia were united across the Bosphorus ; that the western Mediterranean did not exist ; that the Atlantic spread across the Sahara and the Syrian desert far into Western Asia ; that the Caspian Sea and the Sea of Aral are only two of its great pools left in isolation owing to vast movements of elevation and subsidence within three continents ; and that the Black Sea gradually gnawed its way through the Dardanelles into the eastern Mediterranean, and so drained a great part of Western Asia. Thus the actual soil upon which man plays out his destiny is unstable,

and in its chaotic elements he discovers the symbol of his own history.

5. If, then, the earth was once a vast circular road, it is not surprising that the human race gradually began to move round its concentric belts. The advance was temporarily interrupted only where the roadway was broken off and when a new path had not yet been discovered upon the sea. Migration, indeed, appears to be one of the great laws of Nature, and her restlessness early entered into the life of man. Even the stars migrate. There is no real stagnation anywhere. Just as undulations extend from one ocean to another, and just as, in spite of barriers in the ocean's bed, marine creatures are able to migrate from the Equator to the Poles and back again, so, on land a similar current of life and motion early set in, and is still advancing. Even vegetation has wings. We find that the plants of Asia reappear in Europe, and that all kinds of shrubs and trees push their way into different continents. In earlier investigations into the distribution of animals and plants it was usual to pay too much attention to the work of man and too little to the work of Nature. Thus it was supposed that wheat, barley, and the vine must have been transplanted from Asia into Europe by human hands. It was forgotten that vegetation possesses its own dynamic and sporadic power, and that long before man was at work upon it the birds and the winds were sowers. For it is to such agencies as these that modern science attributes the spread of many of the most valuable plants. The fact that at one time in Southern Europe oats were considered to be a weed is a proof that man had not originally sown them there. Wheat, barley, and the vine grew wild long before their culture was known. During innumerable ages Europe and Asia were being silently prepared for their guests,

and the east winds brought seeds from Asia and the west winds gave back seeds from Europe. Moreover, reciprocal fertilising currents were flowing between Europe and Africa. An examination of tertiary deposits has made it clear that many species which were once ascribed solely to the South and the East must have been living on European soil when, so far as man is concerned, Europe was tenantless. No doubt during the glacial period many plants were driven out of Europe to take refuge in Asia until the ice melted and the way was clear again for their return. But recent inquiries appear to have proved that the Ice Age was not so prolonged and that its ravages were not so widespread as was at first supposed. Even during its worst tyranny a great part of Middle and probably all Southern Europe, the south of England, and the Balkan Peninsula were ice-free. Fig-leaves have been discovered in the quaternary deposits of Tuscany and near Marseilles, and remains of olives in pliocene beds near Bologna. Such facts are sufficient to prove that many plants had found their way into Europe without the agency of man. It is now claimed that in the middle of the tertiary period the wild vine was growing in places so distant from each other as France, England, Iceland, Greenland, and Japan. We must distinguish, however, between the existence of a plant in its wild state and a knowledge of its potential value. And there seems reason to believe that it was not in Europe but in Asia that the *culture* of the vine began. We find vineyards spreading from the south to the north, and from the east to the west. The history of human language often shows in a remarkable way how closely ancient races had elbowed each other, and one of its most startling facts is that the European word for *wine* appears to be fundamentally related to the word

which the Hebrews used in Asia and the Ethiopians in Africa.[1]

6. But if plants were thus propagated by natural processes, it is clear that herds of wild cattle and wild horses in search of vegetation could have passed to and fro between the continents long before man was ready to hunt them. Wild sheep and goats were already roaming in Europe before their value was known. The remains of Asiatic as well as of European oxen have been discovered among the megalithic monuments of Brittany and Auvergne. Again, whereas it used to be supposed that the Asiatic Steppes were the only home of the horse, later investigators, like Nehring, claim to have discovered the remains of a wild horse, a native of Europe, existing in a prehistoric age. It was a thick, heavy, coarse breed, however, and here, as in so many other cases, the finer breed came from Asia. Moreover, while in Europe the horse was still being hunted as prey, in Asia and most likely in Babylonia he had been tamed and taught to co-operate with man.[2]

7. We have briefly noticed this exchange of various forms of life between the continents, because the problem of the distribution of the human race is really not very different from the problem of the distribution of animals and plants. At the opening of history we find not merely men but men apparently of allied race astride the frontier which separates Europe and Asia. As we have already seen, we ought to go still further, and say that the history of Europe begins with a racial chaos to which Africa likewise contributed. The oldest European sepulchres have been searched, and human skulls of ten thousand years ago, and displaying close approximations to African and Asiatic

[1] Early Indo-European *waina*, Hebrew *ja'in*, Ethiopian *wain*, old Greek *Foῖνος*, Sanskrit *vênâ*, Latin *vinum*, Slavonic *vino*, Celtic *fín*, old Teutonic *vein*, German *Wein*, English *wine*.

[2] In India, however, in the Vedic age the horse was numbered among the sacrificial victims.

types, have been discovered. At Grenelle near Paris, in an ancient bed of the Seine and far beneath the accumulated alluvium of centuries, the remains of three different races have been disinterred. The skulls which lay deepest were dolichocephalic, that is to say, their characteristic was length rather than breadth, and the jaw was powerfully developed. They have been adjudged to a northern European race which is still represented by the Scandinavian and Teutonic type. Above those remains, and about twelve feet from the surface, other long skulls were found, but in this case the jaw was weak. High authorities such as De Quatrefages, Broca, and Virchow attribute those second skulls to the so-called Iberians who had come from North Africa. The Iberians belonged to the Berber race, and had spread over a wide area, because their remains have been found in Britain, France, Spain, Algeria, and Teneriffe.[1] Moreover, the resemblance of Berber to Egyptian skulls has convinced some writers that once a great Mediterranean people had outposts in Europe and Africa. Lastly, in the uppermost layer of the gravel at Grenelle, about five feet from the surface, there were discovered other human skulls, brachycephalic, that is to say, whose characteristic was breadth rather than length, and they have been supposed to belong to a European race, the Celts. Since, however, an Asiatic race, the Mongolians, are likewise brachycephalic, it cannot be maintained that breadth of skull is a purely European trait. Some writers point out that in the east of Europe there is an approximation to the Asiatic type, and in the south to the African, and that the European is intermediate. The difficulty, however, of attempting to identify any particular cranial form as belonging specially to any particular race is illustrated by the fact that when

[1] Even Virchow is tempted to ask if they did not belong to the "Atlantic race" (pp. 37, 38).

in 1878 a skull from Central Asia was examined by the Anthropological Society of Paris it was judged to be in every respect similar to the type of Central Europe. It is believed that of all physical characteristics the skull is most stable and varies least from one generation to another. An effort was made, therefore, to discover by means of such prehistoric remains the original inhabitants of Europe. Those skulls which lie deepest must be the oldest, and all the skulls attributable to the quaternary period are of the long type. But since such skulls best correspond to those of modern Scandinavians, it has been maintained that the European race, *par excellence*, must have originated not far from Scandinavia. And although it is admitted that the earliest men cannot have possessed white skins, blond hair, and blue eyes, nevertheless since these are the features of modern Scandinavians, their ancestors must have already acquired them in the climate of northern or middle Europe. Unfortunately, however, Virchow had already[1] pointed out that niggers also have long skulls, and that no one can prove that any race possesses invariable characteristics such as long heads, blond hair, and blue eyes. The modern Basques in Southern Europe are dark and have long heads. In northern and southern Germany, Denmark, Belgium, Holland, England, and France the broader heads are not merely numerous but often predominant. And so far as racial colour is concerned the blond type cannot be held to be exclusively European, because certain tribes of the Himálayas are also blond, and gradations of colour are due to climate. Variations within a race may be explained either by mixture with other races or by the influence of climate and habits, or by a combination of both those causes. It is, moreover, doubtful whether the formation of the skull is as invariable as has been supposed. Even those who attempt to

[1] In 1874.

discover a pure primitive European type are compelled to admit that it has suffered transformations. Whereas the ancient Slavs, for instance, had long heads, their descendants are more or less brachycephalic. The most accurate observers perceive in Europe an amalgamation of types, and it seems to be impossible to disentangle the original European race.[1] Long heads are found in Europe and in Africa, and broad heads in Europe and in Asia. Therefore the view has been expressed that originally there were only two primitive races. But science could not stop her inquiry even here, since it is her task to track Nature's baffling law of divergence and variation down to the simplest elements and beginnings. If even the oak-tree has given birth to three hundred different species, we should not be surprised at the infinitive diversity of human stocks, for there is no creature liable to so great variation as man. The maximum of Nature's types are all reducible to the minimum of her archetypes. Her early germs are capable of abundant expansion and ceaseless variety, and her processes have involved an immense intermarriage of living forms. She has interlocked entire races, but has hidden the truth from their descendants. And she leaves us only to guess the steps of her vast synthesis.

8. But if there was an interlocking of races there was likewise an interlocking of their languages. Whereas a superficial observer supposes that the languages of Europe are all different, the student of them knows that they are all related not merely to each other but also to

[1] It is incredible that after the destructive criticism by Van den Gheyn, Reinach, Ujfalvy, Sergi, and Seiler any one can be found to support Penka's theory of a Scandinavian origin of the "Aryan" peoples. Penka even professes to have discovered that it was in Europe that the human race originated (*Origines Ariacæ*, pp. 76 *et sqq.*). Seiler well describes the entire hypothesis as "ein Meer von Unsicherheit—Die Heimath der Indogermanen" (p. 13).

languages beyond Europe. Moreover, that relation was prehistoric. When the annals of Europe began there was being spoken in Hindustan a language structurally and fundamentally the same as the language of the Greeks, the Romans, the Celts, and the ancestors of modern Russians and Englishmen. The old Indian or Sanskrit word for *mother* was *mâtár*, the old Persian was also *mâtar*, Greek was *μήτηρ*, Latin *mater*, Irish *máthir*, old German *muotar*, old Russian *mati*, and Icelandic *módhir*. Similar equations exist for other names of close kin such as father, brother, sister, daughter, and son. The peoples who, although so far sundered, were using this common language had likewise common religious ideas. In Hindustan the god of the sky was Dyâús, in Greece Zeus, in Italy Ju-piter (Dyâús-pitâ′), in ancient Germany Zio. Fire, the Dawn, and the Sun received kindred names in Europe and Asia. The English word *star* was in Sanskrit likewise *stár*, in ancient Persian *stare*, in Greek *ἀστήρ*, in Armenian *astl*, in Latin *stella*, old German *sterro*. And if we turn to names for familiar things and man's daily labour and experience we shall find a startling equivalence. Thus many of the words for primitive processes of agriculture, for barley, night and day, winter and spring, houses, and cattle were the same in Hindustan as in Northern, Central, and Southern Europe. The English word to *weave* is organically related to an old Asiatic-European root *vê* which had the same meaning. We might reproduce similar equivalences indefinitely. We shall mention only one other instance, because it indicates how closely in a primeval age Europe and Asia had come in contact. The word which the early Hindus used for *waggon*, together with names for its constituent parts such as *wheel*, *axle*, and *yoke*, reappear in almost all the languages of Europe. And the fact that the waggon was in use thousands of

years ago partly helps us to see why peoples so remote from each other spoke practically the same language. Their ancestors must have moved away from the seats of a common origin.

9. How, indeed, are we to explain the fact that a language like a living nerve connected humanity in Europe with humanity in Asia in a primeval age? When the discovery of the organic relations between the European languages and those of ancient Iran and Hindustan was made it was immediately supposed that the ancestors of the European peoples had migrated from Asia. The word "Aryan" was applied to the whole stock because according to the Zend-Avesta, the sacred book of one of its branches, Ariana was the holy land of the race.[1] Since, however, it is now known that language is no proper racial test, the word "Aryan" is used timidly. A long controversy, which is by no means closed, has raged round the question whether it was in Asia that the "race" originated at all. That controversy must not detain us here. But it is obvious that Pictet's statement that a language implies a people who spoke it remains true. Even those who reject the too sudden conclusions of early Sanskrit scholars admit that the language and the people who invented it must have had an original unity and nucleus.[2] The great variety of European dialects into which the language was broken—Greek, Latin, Celtic, Lithuanian, Teutonic—may be explained by supposing that just as the discovery of the use of fire or of the plough spread among primitive nations, so the Aryan speech, not merely because it belonged to a conquering race but

[1] Zend-Avesta, Fargard I. 3 (5), Darmesteter's translation. "The first of the good lands and countries which I, Ahura Mazda, created was the Airyana Vaêgô, by the Vanguhi Dâitya."

[2] Johannes Schmidt, p. 29.

because it possessed superior powers of expression, was accepted among alien peoples who were less articulate and less civilised. Here, however, we are mainly concerned with the fact that a current of thought and speech actually akin to our own was passing between Asia and Europe in a prehistoric age. The controversy regarding the exact point whence that stream first arose has created a kind of continental jingoism, and writers have asserted the claims of Europe with as much indignation and passion as if they had been writing patriotic history. But in the primeval ages the debt between Europe and Asia was no doubt reciprocal as it is to-day. And in the eye of universal history the work of the world belongs to no single nation or race or continent, but is the result of a collaboration of the continents.

10. Although we have no clock or instrument to measure the whole night of ages, there are reasons for believing that at least so far as the higher aspects of civilisation are concerned Asia was old before Europe was young. No doubt man was alive and busy in Europe in the later Ice Age. We know that he was struggling with Nature and already attempting to create a home for himself when the hippopotamus was in England and when the mammoth and other monsters were trampling the soil of Europe. Although the world about him was little else than a menagerie, man had already become articulate in his own peculiar way. In one of the caves of central France there was discovered the tusk of a mammoth with a sketch of the animal carved upon it. That fact alone would prevent us from saying that pictorial art had an Asiatic origin. But we cannot follow European man up the painful ladder of his ascent. He had come through unknown depths of savagery before he began to adorn himself with the red oxide of iron. And the bracelets of shells which are found in his

graves are a signal not merely of his primeval vanity but of his partial escape from more degrading conditions. We detect, however, a far superior civilisation coming, and coming very early, from the East. It is now claimed that at least in the third millennium before Christ, and long prior to Phœnician activity, a common civilisation with an Oriental basis linked the European and the Asiatic shores of the Ægean. Industrial and artistic methods, together with religious ideas, were common to both sides. The most recent investigations seem rather to increase the European debt. The centre, the west, and the north of Europe remained dark for ages, and the reason was that they were not in contact with the East. The Latin word for iron (*ferrum*) is Asiatic, and together with a knowledge of working the metal had been brought to Italy by the Phœnicians.[1] Moreover, we must distinguish between peoples in whose territory metal lay and peoples who knew how to make use of it. Europe was full of iron, but as late as 1000 B.C. stone implements were being used in the north and the centre. And in Scandinavia iron did not make its appearance until long after it was known in the south. The great iron mines in Gaul and in Britain belonged to the Celts, but it is believed that they obtained their knowledge of the metal either from the Greeks or the Italians. On the other hand, iron as well as other metals had long been in use in the East. The Greek word for gold (χρυσός) is Asiatic (Assyrian *ḫurâṣu*), and the word for metal (μέταλλον) betrays likewise Semitic influence.[2] The arts and the sciences had advanced in Asia long before they were known in the west. While the European was still carving rude characters on the rocks great achievements in sculpture had taken place at Babylon. Although, too, even a savage

[1] Schrader, p. 207.

[2] *Metal* has been traced through the Latin *metallum* to a Hebrew verb *mâtal*, which signifies "to work like a smith."

tribe may be able to invent a system of writing, and although doubtless there were primitive European alphabets, yet the alphabet which we use to-day was invented in Asia nineteen centuries before Christ. While, again, in Europe the plough was still the crooked branch of a tree, agriculture had become a science in the East, and astronomy, most likely coinage, and certainly the modern system of measuring time, all had an Asiatic origin. Asia, therefore, was frequently the giver, Europe the receiver. Europe can no more throw off the influence of Asia than a bather emerging from the sea can prevent the water dripping from him. Many of the deepest causes of her civilisation are to be found in eastern lands. It was in Asia that Christ was born. We cannot say, indeed, that Europe was only an Asiatic outpost. The earliest prehistoric relations between both continents are lost in the depth of ages. But there is still a sense in which Europe is the evening of the world, Asia its dawn. And it is still possible to say that the human movement has been from sunrise to sunset and then back to sunrise as the West repenetrated the East.

11. It is for such reasons, then, that in the following pages, in which we make an attempt to catch the spirit of some ancient civilisations, we shall begin not with Europe but with Asia. And we shall first choose Hindustan; not, indeed, because its culture was the oldest—compared with Sumerian civilisation it appeared late—but because the conquerors of early India, who were allied at least by language to the European peoples, had consolidated a social system and had created a literature while the greater part of Europe was still in chaos. The civilisation of Hindustan, therefore, marked the strongest Aryan outpost in the East.[1] From

[1] According to some writers, the Ainu who conquered Japan in prehistoric times spoke an Aryan language, and it is certain that they

this eastern limit we shall then move through Western Asia to the Mediterranean. And when we arrive *there* we shall find that during many ages the social history of Europe might have been Asiatic rather than European. Once again we discover the closest contact. For although the political experiments of the West early betrayed signs of new ideas concerning human liberty, yet the basis of Western and Eastern civilisation long remained the same, and that basis was slavery. During many ages Europe and Asia exchanged millions of slaves. It is precisely in the struggle for freedom that we find some sense of unity amid the confusion of the ancient world. We certainly do not find it in racial relations, since members of the same race were frequently at war. And, in spite of mutual borrowings, we do not find it in their languages, their political ideals, or their religions. But we find it in their system of labour. The history of humanity is mainly the history of labour, and at first all labour was slavery. In its earliest as in its latest phases labour has presented the same features. As soon as it was organised it assumed the form of slavery throughout the ancient world. Slavery was gradually abolished, and to-day, although different nations possess different political ideals, their industrial systems are the same.

12. The record of the great social experiments of the past is chiefly a record of injustice and suffering. It is also a record of the disappearance of the States in which those experiments were made. Perhaps, therefore,

were not a Mongolian race. Some of the local names in Japan still indicate ancient Aryan settlements. It has even been claimed that the Ainu of Yezo betray racial affinities which connect them with European rather than with Asiatic peoples. Red hair and light skins are not uncommon. But if the ancient Ainu were Aryans their descendants have suffered degeneration, since in some respects they are scarcely human beings.

we shall be able to detect some relation between the causes of their exhaustion and their fall and the defects in their ideals of justice. In the second volume we shall then be able to ask to what extent those causes of ruin are still active within the communities of the modern world. History is full of the presence of a Nemesis, whether in the form of a prolonged decay or a violent collapse of States. Entire civilisations have perished in the attempt to create a social order which appears to have contained only the elements of its own disorder and dissolution. And although modern States are apparently more stable, we cannot believe that the laws of history have ceased to operate. In the life of nations those laws find expression in long processes of collective growth and collective exhaustion. At no period has the world presented the spectacle of all its States enjoying the same degree of vitality. On the contrary, the rise towards the maximum of national energy in one case is often simultaneous with the fall towards the minimum in another. History, as well as Nature, displays a mysterious economy, and whole races may lie fallow during centuries in order suddenly to burst into vigour. On the other hand, the process of organic decay appears to be as irresistible in those great organisms called nations as in the most minute forms of life. Secret causes working like sappers and miners underneath a State often begin to show the real extent of their devastation only in the moment of crisis and attack. Some races have been obliterated, and others have been broken into fragments and have suffered so great displacement that we are frequently unable to trace the route over which they were driven. To-day the territorial division of the world is utterly different from what it was in antiquity. How many generations of men representing how many different races have

fought for the possession of the same soil which remained permanent and fruitful while *they* passed away? And yet in spite of the perpetual rearrangement of the world's map, the problem of the adjustment of the nations towards each other, which is the supreme problem of humanity, remains unchanged. That problem arises out of the distribution of the world's wealth. The struggle between different racial and national groups is really only a larger form of the struggle between individuals within the groups. For just as the wealth of each State is never and can never be equalised among its members, so, the revenue of the entire world is unequally divided among different peoples. It is at this point that we begin to discover how closely the internal happiness of a State depends upon its outward relations, and how the fortunes of the individual are bound up with the fortunes of the aggregate. In ancient times slavery was the means of the production of wealth, and, other things being equal, that State which possessed the greatest number of slaves—in other words, the greatest number of the implements of ancient industry—was, at least temporarily, the most prosperous. Whereas such a system involved the utter absence of any genuine form of cohesion in the national life, it is precisely in social co-operation that modern progress best expresses itself. Although that instinct is not yet and may never be perfect, nevertheless *it* undoubtedly marks the real difference between the ancient and the modern world. But he who attempts to discover an ideal goal in human history could never rest content even when the world contained a series of States at harmony within themselves but in antagonism with each other. Just as the tragedy of national life consists in the fact that in the midst of wealth there persists a poverty—the modern equivalent of ancient slavery—which helps to destroy

and degrade the nation's manhood and diminish its energy, so, the tragedy of history consists in the fact that although the world's harvest is abundant enough to satisfy the needs of humanity, its reaping is regulated by the law of battle. Hence the pressure within each State is aggravated by the combined pressure of all States against each other. The moral unity of mankind is therefore still only an ideal and not a reality. Nevertheless, he who ponders the great problems which the world's history presents is tempted to ask whether it is not possible that just as the feuds of families and of clans at last gave way before the idea of national unity, so the feuds of nations may not at length be silenced in the combined life and task of mankind. There can be no doubt that there comes a time when the ideals of nationality and the ideals of Humanity are in conflict. But the achievement of national is only a stage in the achievement of international justice. The overthrow of nations has frequently been the Nemesis which awaited their refusal to co-operate. That was certainly true of the early Aryan tribes of Hindustan, of the Semitic States of Western Asia, of the cities of Greece, and of the ancient and the mediæval communities of Italy. The dilemma which History places before her students is this: on the one hand, the concentration of national energy is indispensable for the work of civilisation; but, on the other hand, that concentration not only creates antagonistic national groups by whose conflicts civilisation is imperilled and often destroyed, but creates also *within* the groups antagonisms and sufferings which sooner or later find their vent in revolution.

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CHAPTER II

HINDUSTAN

In the modern world there is no room for those great racial migrations which took place in ancient times. Modern peoples enjoy fixity of abode, whereas in earlier ages actual displacements of the nations occurred, and whole communities were on the march. Even in historical times those movements had not ceased. Thucydides points out that the early Greek population of Hellas was still nomadic, and according to Cæsar the Celts and the Germans of his own age were profoundly restless and moved from place to place. As late as the fifth century after Christ the Huns came in battalions out of Asia, and in the Middle Ages hordes of Mongols penetrated almost into the heart of Europe. If we might borrow an illustration from physical science, we should say that the molar movement of mankind or the movement in masses has ceased, but that the molecular movement or development within the mass continues. No doubt volcanic action slumbers in human society as in certain regions of the earth, and its next outbreak can never be predicted. But, on the whole, there now exists an equilibrium at least more stable than was possible during the first stirrings of mankind. The human race was unable to settle down until it had explored the world's geography, and had satisfied its curiosity by a survey of the earth's surface. That survey has almost come to an end, and the world is now divided into

groups. All early history is the account of the discovery of sites for new nations. It was only when those sites had been selected and when frontiers had become fixed that the peoples subsided into habits of industry.

2. But the reasons for that earlier restlessness were economic. The needs of tribes increased with their numbers. Industry was not yet in being, and if agriculture existed at all, it was of the rudest kind. There was no plough. Man had not yet discovered the fields. He was ignorant both of the material and of the moral meaning of sowing and of reaping. Because he was thus incapable of developing land he soon exhausted the wild crops and herbs which its rough state afforded him, and he was compelled always to move on. The accounts of early humanity are, therefore, full of this search for new landscapes. All history is restless, but modern nations are really sedentary. Their roots grow deeper and deeper. In war, for instance, it is not the whole mass that moves, but only a portion. On the contrary, the early tribe was perpetually mobilised and ready to start. Its frontier was its advanced guard, which was continually shifting. For man was a traveller from the beginning, and the rivers were his first guides. He saw the rivers running, and he followed them over the earth. Races speaking kindred languages can be traced along the banks of the Indus and the Ganges, the Tigris and the Euphrates, the Danube, the Rhine, the Tiber, and the Thames. Man seized upon the silver threads of the rivers, and they guided him through the scenic "labyrinth of the world."

3. We are able to trace two stages in the human migratory process. First, when man was still poor in cattle his movements were more sporadic and sudden, and his halts were less prolonged. There was nothing to detain him. It was not meant that, like an animal, he should call a lair his home. Rather, hunger and

misery drove him on, and his first roads were only the tracks of his prey. Perhaps it is well that so thick a veil hides from us that scene of struggle and horror in which the combatants were the animals and man. But, second, his growing dominion and the accumulation of flocks and herds created the need of some kind of organisation. The beginnings of pastoral life already brought more leisurely habits and a certain sense of security. Any tribe which discovered a well-watered plain would be tempted to linger at least as long as the surrounding country supplied their cattle with pasture. But the longer the halt the greater was the chance that a wandering tribe might at last discover the productive value of land, abandon mere pasturage for the sake of some primitive form of agriculture, and become familiar with the idea of harvest. The invention of the yoke, and the fact that the ox and the horse could be harnessed, must have been to early ages an event as important as the invention of the steam-engine to the modern world. When we first catch a glimpse of the Aryans who conquered Hindustan they are in the midst of the excitement of such discoveries, and are pressing into the abundant plains between the Himálayas and the Vindhya range. Their advance is marked in the Vedic hymns by a gladdening sense of landscape. Indeed, the fascination of the Vedas consists in a lyrical appreciation of Nature and in their singers' joy at the approach to new scenes. The snows of the Himálayas had been left far behind when the conquerors entered the heat of the Middle Land.

4. Whence had they come? Sometimes a single word is like a latchkey which opens for us doors which were closed and at which we had knocked in vain. Such a word is the Sanskrit *Himá*, winter.[1] The fact that that

[1] The oldest form appears to be *Ghiam*, Iranian *Zyam*. *Cf.* Spiegel, *Arische Periode*, p. 21.

word was chiefly used in reckoning *time* even long after the Aryans had settled in India is of great significance. For it means that they had come from a climate in which winter was prolonged. In other words, they had come from the north, because it cannot have been in a tropical land that they became so impressed by the winter's duration. Since the word *Himá* reappears in Himálaya, it is tempting to believe that the conquerors whose conquest was immortalised in the Vedic hymns had come from the great Asiatic highlands. But it is idle to attempt to discover the exact point of their departure. We know, however, that it was not east of the Kâbul River, because in the Vedic hymns the advance is made not from the Ganges to the Indus, but from the Indus to the Ganges. And the conquerors did not arrive from the south—that is, from the sea—because in the Vedas there is mentioned only the rudest kind of river-boat, without mast or sail, and we cannot believe that in a prehistoric age in which navigation did not exist a multitude of men could have crossed the ocean. There is no Poseidon in early Hindu mythology, and indeed there is reason to suppose that the invading race had never seen the sea. Besides, in the Vedas the line of movement is from north to south as well as from west to east. There remains, therefore, the west, which has so often been the open door into India, and all the evidence points to the conclusion that the people who called themselves Aryans had come from Kâbulistan. But we can trace them still further towards the country which lies south of the river Oxus, and here, in Bactria, we discover the most ancient abodes of a people who likewise called themselves Aryans. By race, by language, and by tradition the Aryans of Iran (ancestors of the Persians) and the Aryans of India were closely akin, and had once dwelt together. But, as we saw in the previous chapter, the lines of a prehistoric

racial connection ran over a far wider area and reached Europe. At least the Aryan *language* extended in prehistoric times, as it extends to-day, from India to Ireland. Even the most cautious investigators admit, for instance, that the early Indian and the early European name for "God" had a common root and a common meaning.[1] That the primitive dictionary of Europe was fundamentally the same as the primitive dictionary of a great part of Central Asia remains one of the most startling facts in the history of mankind.

5. The difficulty of the problem of racial distribution lies in the fact that a road which leads east leads also west. Were the people who spoke Aryan languages in Asia emigrants or descendants of emigrants from Europe, or were the people who spoke Aryan languages in Europe emigrants from Asia? The problem appears to be quite insoluble, and the controversy it has raised is sterile. No one believes, however, that the races in possession of the Indo-European language extended from the earliest times over the immense area which they now inhabit. We detect, indeed, a definite racial current moving westwards into Europe, and another moving eastwards and southwards in Central Asia; but no one has discovered the source of both streams, and a great gap divides them. Migrations and counter-migrations had probably taken place ages before any human movement was chronicled. Those who believe in the European origin of the "race" and the language with which we are dealing point out that the Asiatic area covered by peoples speaking languages akin to those of Europe was comparatively small. Northern India, Persia, Armenia, and a portion of the Caucasus

[1] Gruppe, p. 120. Sanskrit *dêvá*, Latin *deus*, old Irish *dia*, Norse *tivar*. Sanskrit *dyâús*, Greek *Zeus*, Latin *Jupiter* (*dyâús-pitâ'*), Teutonic *Tiu*, *Zio*. The root *div*, which meant "bright," "shining," was, as Gruppe points out, "predestined" to become the basis of the conception of deity.

form the maximum region which can be allowed to the Indo-European languages on the Asiatic side. The presumption is, therefore, that the occupants of the smaller area were only offshoots from a central western stock. In other words, to derive the European languages from the kindred tongues of Central Asia and other isolated districts is to derive the greater from the less, the complex from the simple, and such a method is condemned as unscientific. Moreover, the greater variety of the European dialects is supposed to indicate a greater antiquity.[1] This argument has been described as one of genius,[2] and has been called unanswerable.[3] We conceive, however, that the answer is as follows. The development of the greater from the less, the complex from the simple, is the law of organic forms, and language is peculiarly organic. The area of England is small compared with the combined areas of the United States, of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, in all of which English is spoken, and yet no historian of the future will suppose that it was not in England that the English language originated. Again, although plants or animals may vary indefinitely, their types are all reducible to simpler species. Indeed, variation implies not primary but secondary forms. The presumption is, therefore, that the more exuberant growth of European languages rather indicates a far later development. Lastly, the argument in question neglects the fact that in Europe the Aryan language was imposed upon non-Aryan peoples, and that, for instance, the divergence between Greek, Latin, Celtic, Teutonic, and Slavonic may well be explained by a rich admixture of foreign elements. If, on

[1] Latham, pp. cxl. *et sqq.* *Cf.* "Elements of Comparative Philology" (London, 1862), pp. 611 *et sqq.*

[2] Poesche, p. 61.

[3] Taylor, "The Origin of the Aryans," p. 20.

the other hand, we are told that Sanskrit, the language of the early Aryan invaders of India, is less archaic than some of the ancient European languages, the reply appears to be that archaic forms of speech are often better preserved in younger than in older communities. The French which is spoken in Canada has retained primitive idioms that have disappeared from the language spoken in France. Even if the attempt to reduce the antiquity of the Aryan settlements in Hindustan were successful, the belief in a European origin would not be made easier. If it could be proved, for instance, that Hindustan was first conquered only as late as the seventh century B.C., or even in the fourteenth, we should expect to find traces of European influence. If the early adventurers from the West had really been in contact with European peoples on the Baltic, we should expect to find that they had brought to Asia a word for the sea, whereas there is no such word common to both branches. And if they had arrived so late as some modern writers suppose, we should also expect to find equivalents for such European words as salt, mill, and arable land, but those words are likewise absent.[1] One of the main arguments in support of a western origin for the Aryans is the fact that the word for *lion*, which is common to the languages of Europe, has no equivalent in the Aryan languages of Asia. But we may well ask, why, then, was the word not brought to Asia by the European emigrants? They can hardly have forgotten it, since in Asia lions were to

[1] The Sanskrit *ájra*, which is the equivalent of Greek ἀγρός, Latin *ager*, means only pasture-land. And although there was a word for grinding (*mar*), it had not yet the European signification of grinding corn (Schrader, p. 285). Salt is never even mentioned in the earliest Vedas. On the other hand, there are close agreements between the Indo-Iranian languages for such words as "cornfield," "seed corn," "sickle," "plough," and "wheat." The two great branches of the Aryan race had learned independently the fundamental processes of agriculture.

be seen in plenty.[1] Lastly, the fact that the names for such trees as the oak and the beech are again shared only by the languages of Europe may be explained by supposing "that the Indo-Europeans before the dispersion dwelt in a thinly wooded region." If the oak and the beech are European trees *par excellence*, there is little wonder that it was in Europe that they received their names. But the investigation into the antiquity of the Aryan settlements in Asia is of far more importance for the discovery of a primeval racial nucleus than the examination of isolated words. It is admitted on all hands that the Aryan Indians and the Iranians once formed a single people, and that their languages were organically related to the languages of Europe. Now the researches of W. Geiger appear to have proved that the prehistoric seats of the Iranians cannot have been anywhere west of the Caspian Sea. Their great religious book, the Zend-Avesta, although comparatively modern in form, is by no means modern in substance. In the opinion of some scholars it is an abridgment or recension of traditional religious doctrine. It makes no mention of Medes or Persians, but only of "Aryans"; it contains no historical reference to the struggles between Media and Babylon, and no allusion to such towns as Ecbatana, Hecatompylos, and Susa, or to any city west of Ragha and Babylon. Moreover, it reveals a primitive civilisation. Salt, glass, and iron were unknown to the Avesta people, and there is reason to believe that coined money did not exist and that payment was still made only in cattle. Everything points to the conclusion that the Iranians were in a transition stage between pastoral and agricultural habits. And in spite of immense borrowings from East and West, the

[1] As a matter of fact, Pauli pointed out that the Indo-European root *liu* can account for all the European forms of the word (*Die Benennung des Löwen bei den Indogermanen*, Münden, 1873, pp. 17 *et sqq.*). *Cf.* Van den Gheyn, pp. 15, 16.

central elements of the Avesta religion appear to indicate that the land in which it first arose was eastern Iran, that is to say, the region from which the Aryans of India had likewise come.

6. It was doubtless the shortest and the easiest road—in other words, it was the Khyber Pass—which the earliest, like many of the later invaders, chose for their descent into India. On the banks of the Kâbul River, three thousand feet above the sea, they passed through a land which yields three yearly harvests, and they must have seen wild apples, wild grapes, and wild plums, cedars, tamarisks, roses, and violets growing there as they grow to-day. But a rumour of even more fertile soil and of gold lying in the plain beneath hastened their descent southwards, and soon they would be addressing the rivers of the Punjab as "golden bedded."[1] If we do not know the exact region whence they had come, we at least know that when they entered India they were a white race. Even to-day in the Himálayan valleys we find tribes speaking Aryan dialects and possessing white skins, ruddy complexions, and often flaxen hair. There is the clearest evidence that the people who became Indians were proud of their racial colour, which, however, was gradually lost under the sun of the tropics. The physical difference between victors and vanquished was noticed by the soldiers of Alexander the Great, and they supposed that the Aryans were Egyptians and the aborigines Ethiopians. According to Megasthenes, the Aryans were distinguished by their "proud bearing," and Arrian tells us that in person they were slender and tall and of much lighter weight than other men. In the Vedic hymns, which chronicle their victory, there is constant scornful reference to "the dark race," and Indra, the Aryan sky god, is described as fighting

[1] Rig-Veda, x. 75, 8.

against that race on behalf of his "white friends."[1] On the threshold of Hindustan a distinction was already made between the "Aryan colour" and the colour of the Dasyu or Indian native. The word Dasyu or Dasa meant enemy, and it was probably used both by the Iranians and the Hindus to denote originally a Mongolian people. In India it came to mean everything that was opposed to the language, race, and religion of the invaders. As we shall see later, it was during this invasion that the foundation of the great system of caste and slavery, which has made India stagnant for ages, was laid. But at first all was in motion, and the tribes either resisted the new enemies or fled before them. That the conquest was not easy is proved by the frequent appeals in the Vedas to Vedic gods to destroy "the unbelievers," who were driven eastwards and southwards until the whole northern plain from the Indus to the Ganges was fit to be called Aryavarta, the land of the Aryans. The plain, which is rich in rivers, was worth invading because its area contains more than 500,000 square miles, and it is the most fertile and most famous of Indian lands. We do not know how long a period its conquest involved, or what was the exact route of Aryan expansion. The Vedas are silent, and present us with no military maps. In place of a succession of dates we have only a succession of landscapes in the Vedas, indicating the advance into inner India and towards the Ganges. The fact that there are no names of towns creates a certain sense of vagueness, but that early villages and fortified posts existed, especially on the river-banks, is beyond doubt. There must have been a continual displacement of the native tribes, and a seizure of their homesteads, herds, and flocks. Now and again we

[1] Rig-Veda, i. 100, 18. "With his white friends he won the battle."

see as in a flash the human chaos which had suddenly filled India. The invaders describe themselves and their gods as irresistible, and Indra, for instance, is seen gathering in the dark race by thousands "like a gambler."[1] He brings them down with the bow, and indeed it was the bow that did the work of conquest. For in one song a singer says proudly, "It is with the bow that we capture oxen and with the bow that we get victory."[2] At the head of the invaders marched furious gods. Single lines of the Vedic hymns chronicle great catastrophes and conflagrations, for the tribes were actually burned out of their dwellings. They are described as fleeing before Agni, the great Aryan god of fire, who, like some divine incendiary, let loose his flames in India.[3] The early hymns also show us that in the midst of this human struggle there was a struggle with nature, and we seem to watch hordes of men laboriously hewing their way across the continent. How, for instance, were the rivers bridged? The earth is invoked to be kind, to be "thornless," and to offer shelter especially at night.[4] Although the Vedic hymns are full of the spirit of victory and fearlessness, as befits an Aryan utterance, they also betray a sense of doubt and danger. There is a night prayer to be delivered from the wolf and the she-wolf.[5] And in one striking passage the wolf is described as lying in wait at the drinking pools to seize the cattle driven thither by thirst. Although the tiger is not mentioned, the lion, the bear, the serpent, and the jackal are all known and feared. And the gods are called upon to protect every living thing, "two-footed or four-footed," which sleeps and wakes in the village.[6] What is still more remarkable is that the gods are sometimes called upon

[1] Rig-Veda, ii. 12, 4.
[2] Ibid., vi. 75, 2.
[3] Ibid., vii. 5, 3.
[4] Ibid., i. 22, 15.
[5] Ibid., x. 127, 6.
[6] Ibid., i. 114, 1.

to protect the Aryans from each other. For, although united against the Dasyus, they were early at war among themselves. They thus foreshadowed in the East the conflicts which later would break up other Aryan communities, such as the Greeks and the Latins, in the West. No doubt among the Vedic tribes we find in one instance as many as five peoples in alliance, but that Aryan cursed Aryan is proved by the fact that the gods are implored to destroy rival kindred. The Vedic hymns contain a kind of rough rehearsal of all later struggles and tragedies on the soil of India, and we even find expressed in the songs of the victors the fears of to-day.

7. The Vedic peoples had ceased to be mere nomads long before they entered Hindustan. This is implied in one of their words for a community, *kṛshṭi*, which meant "those who used the plough." In their sacred hymns the plough itself receives frequent praise, and is called the begetter of food. Since they had words for cornfields, sickle, and wheat, great progress must have been already made in agriculture. Moreover, stones were used in grinding corn. Whether used for pastoral or agricultural purposes, the fertile lands lying between the rivers were called *yávasa*, and, in the opinion of most writers, were owned by the community. Individual property in land was unknown. It has been said that a system in which groups of kinsmen cultivated fields in common cannot be described as agrarian communism.[1] But it is uncommonly like it. It was a kind of subdivided communism. And if it be admitted[2] that in the pastoral period private ownership of land did not exist, it seems

[1] Fustel de Coulanges, *Questions Historiques*, p. 92.

[2] Ibid., p. 19. Fustel de Coulanges appears to weaken his position in the following sentence: "Nous ne prétendons pas qu'il soit interdit de croire à une communauté primitive" (ibid., p. 115).

almost certain that when the community became sedentary the older system must have lingered during many generations. Thus in the ownership by groups we should probably see the middle stage of transition from tribal to private ownership. Just as the produce of the chase had been shared by those who had hunted together, the harvest was at first shared by those who had tilled the land. Family property took the form of houses and cattle, although, even in this case, the house father was only a trustee, and could not alienate any part of his wealth.[1] That the struggle for cattle rather than for arable land had begun early, and had been fierce, receives striking confirmation in the fact that a word (*gávishti*) which originally meant "desire for cows" passed into a word for war.[2] Long after the Indian Aryans had ceased to be mere herdsmen they continued to sing the praises of oxen. Milk played an important part in their diet and their ritual. The cow is declared to make a house happy, and the gods are implored to increase the Aryan herds. It was, indeed, only in cattle that the natives were rich, and their flocks therefore fell to the victors. Although coined money already existed in the Vedic age,[3] barter was the chief form of trade, and the cow was the measure of value. Goats, sheep, and even horses were exchanged according to the market price of a cow. There is an amusing passage in which a keen salesman congratulates himself that he had returned from the market without having sold his goods, since the price offered had been so poor.[4] The Aryans had thus brought commercial habits into India, and there is evidence that they even carried on foreign trade.[5] Waggon-builders, plough-makers, boat-builders, weavers, and smiths were

[1] Leist, *Alt Arisches Jus Civile*, vol. ii. p. 171.
[2] Lassen, 815. [3] Rig-Veda, viii. 78, 2. [4] Ibid., iv. 24, 9.
[5] Ibid., iv. 25, 7; v. 34, 7; vi. 13, 3. *Cf.* Gruppe, pp. 1-4.

all busy. A primitive system of medicine was already in existence, and herbs were used as amulets against disease. It is doubtful if silver was known, and lead is never mentioned; but copper was in use, and gold had created excitement, and the gods were asked for more of it. We hear of golden earrings, bracelets, and cups. If gold appeared in the form of coined money, it was in danger of being lost at the gaming-table, for gambling is mentioned in the Vedas. Music, dancing, and chariot races formed part of the amusements of the people, and we even catch glimpses of an early vanity in statements concerning "well-fitting clothes."[1] Such facts prove that social life was thoroughly organised. Centuries had passed since the folk were wandering in search of a home. It is, for instance, deeply interesting that one of their old words for a human settlement meant only "a night shelter," and that the word was gradually abandoned when villages were built. The long roads over which early man travelled were at last to end in hamlets and cities. The village community founded upon blood relationship was the centre of Aryan life. We detect, indeed, in early India that social and political organisation which was peculiarly Aryan, and reappeared, with the same features, among the ancient Persians, the Greeks, the Latins, the Celts, the Teutons, and the Slavs. That system may be described as an aggregate of clans (*vîkes*), with independent chiefs, but united for war under an elective or hereditary king. In no case was the monarchy originally absolute, because we find invariably a common legislative assembly (*samiti*) which the leaders consulted. The political divisions of all Aryan communities were really mobilised battalions, and their civil organisation rested upon a military basis. A combination of several families was called a *viç*, a word

[1] *Suvasana*, *surabhi*. Zimmer, p. 262.

which spread throughout Europe, and indicated the clan villages of all peoples speaking Aryan languages.[1] In India each community had its common council or *sabhā*, whose deliberations were carried on by the heads of families. The foundations of jurisprudence were already laid, and trials took place before the assembled people. Law (*dhárma*) meant that which was fixed and unalterable, and its violation (*â'gas*) was punished. The "straight," the "true," was *ritá*, with which some scholars compare Latin *ratio*, and the false was *anrita*, the irrational. Murder was avenged by kinsmen, and guilt was discovered by the primeval ordeal of fire. The law against the debtor was specially severe, and the bankrupt was fastened like a criminal to the stake, where he might perish by thirst and hunger unless his friends redeemed him. In the Vedas there is a striking reference to the guilt of the gambler who brings his family to ruin. The family, indeed, was the basis of the community, and precautions were taken to ensure its stability. The idea of hearth and home was as firmly established in those early Aryan tribes as among the ancient Romans or the modern British. Marriage was a sacred institution, and the bride who was to become "the lady of the house" (*pátnî*) was first betrothed before the sacred hearth. Doubtless polygamy but not polyandry existed; and that the family was closely and permanently organised is shown by the presence of words for father- and mother-in-law, and brother-, sister-, daughter-, and son-in-law. In strange contrast, indeed, with the storm of racial hate which had broken over India is the invaders' sense of home and desire for peace. The Indian word for home (*damá*) spread likewise through Western Asia into Euope, and reappeared

[1] Zend *vîs*, Greek Fικ, Latin *vicus*, Irish *fích*, Cornish *gwic*, Slavonic *vise*, Gothic *veihs*.

among the Greeks, the Romans, the Irish, and the Slavs,[1] and it has aroused passionate affection wherever a people have become great. In the Vedas we discover traces almost of a modern reverence for all that it means in the life of man. The guardian genius of the house, Vâsto Špati, is frequently invoked, especially at night, when protection is most needed. And when that watch and guard is assured, then the house mother and the house father, and even the house dog, sleep in safety.[2] As evening closes on the village the cows come home from the meadows, and we are reminded in one of the hymns that since the cattle have been at work all day they should now rest in the stalls.[3] Even the eagles sleep.[4] But perhaps the most impressive utterances regarding the home are found in those hymns which are addressed to Agni, the god of fire. His name, also, early appeared in Southern Europe (Latin *ignis*) and among the Baltic peoples (Slavonic *ognĭ*). Although the Indian Aryans do not appear to have possessed household gods equivalent to those of the Greeks and the Latins (Hestia, Vesta), yet in their case too it was in the common living-room (*agniçāla*) that the house father kindled the sacred fire. Its continuous burning guaranteed the continuity of the family. And Agni is described as man's guest sitting in the midst of the house.[5]

8. Although, however, the Vedic peoples, like the Romans and the Greeks, possessed household altars as soon as they possessed houses, yet the gods whom they chiefly worshipped were gods of the sky. Agni, for

[1] Greek δόμος, Latin *domus*, old Irish *aur-dam*, Slavonic *domŭ*. The English word house comes from the Teutonic *hûs*, whose origin is uncertain (Schrader, p. 343).

[2] Rig-Veda, vii. 55, 5.

[3] Ibid., vi. 28, 1.

[4] Ibid., x. 127, 5.

[5] "The wonderful guest" (i. 44, 4; i. 69, 2).

example, had condescended to dwell with men, but he could not be imprisoned within any house or even within any temple. Only the open vault of heaven was the temple of Vedic gods. Agni was everywhere, in plants, trees, and stones. He burned through long nights when the sun was invisible, and was thus a kind of proxy of the sun. Moreover, he was the signal of the abundant rains which fell from thunderstorms. The flame upon the hearth was thus a fragment of the lightning, since Agni lived in the clouds as well as on the earth. Like Mitra he was the sleepless god.[1] The Vedas are full of the sense of a strange mingling of the powers of earth and sky (*dyâvâ-prithivî*). Nowhere has the religion of nature received more vivid expression. The two great forms of sky powers, (1) solar and (2) atmospheric, fill the singers with awe. The triumph of light against darkness and of the fertilising showers against drought are the subject of unwearied praises. Indra, the warrior god, the power behind the meteoric Presences of heaven, is the special friend of man, for he makes the sun rise and the rain descend. And in no poetry is there so vivid a sense of morning. Many of the Vedic hymns are songs to sunrise, and it is fitting that they should have come to us out of that early East. It was not yet the age of symbolism, for the gods were actually identified with natural forces. The poets betray that longing to understand the world which reappeared and found different and somewhat sadder expression among the early philosophers of Greece. Whereas, however, the destructive power of fire troubled Heraclitus, it had no terror for the Vedic thinkers, who found even "the lightnings laughing," and declared them to be the torch of the gods. What troubled the early Aryans was not the presence but the *absence* of some of those natural

[1] Rig-Veda, iii. 2, 14; 59, 1.

forces whose apparition guaranteed human welfare. In periods of great drought it was natural to long for the flash in the sky which was a signal of coming rain. Hence the poets impatiently ask, where do the lightnings abide?[1] The periodic withdrawal of sun, moon, and stars agitated in a naïve way men who looked to the sky for help. The great problem was, where is the sun at night? Where do the dawns go? Where are the waters when the earth is parched? The Indian firmament was anxiously watched as men watch for omens. The Great Bear had been noticed, but the poet asks in wonder why stars, which are high in the heavens at night, should vanish with the morning. The answer to such questions was twofold, and accordingly two different theories concerning the gods were invented. In the first place, it was supposed that they were compelled to fight rival demons who enjoyed a certain share of power, a kind of alternation of omnipotence. Thus, for instance, the dawns are in prison all night; some evil power has kidnapped the sun; and if the earth is dry and the crops wither it is because Vritra, the demon of drought, has stolen the waters of Indra. Given such a view, man is at once seen to be the ally of his gods, encouraging them to combat the evil power; and the meat and drink of the sacrifice are actually conceived as strengthening the god, Indra or Agni, for his task. Moreover, the performance of the ritual is believed to hasten those processes of nature necessary for human existence, and to control the succession of the seasons. At the altars the gods are man's guests. At this stage the Vedic singers looked their gods or "shining ones" full in the face, and fear was almost absent. They urge the gods to act, and to act suddenly and bravely against all evil Powers. We may still consider the Vedas as a

[1] Rig-Veda, i. 105, 1.

kind of bugle songs for the Aryan race. Their energy and intensity seem to belong naturally to that branch of humanity which has borne the main burden of civilisation in the East as well as the West. The frequent behest for invigorating seasons may indeed indicate that the northern race had very early begun to feel the effects of that climate of inner India which would gradually tamper with their character, and make *them* too at last the prey of new invaders. But other passages reveal a people advancing almost recklessly on the road of conquest, and feeling themselves akin to their own storm gods "who shake the earth like a speck of dust."[1] The imagery which they transferred to the divine operations was naïvely borrowed from their own experience. The sun rolls up the darkness like a skin.[2] The sun is in a golden waggon.[3] Unweariedly the poets describe the Indian aurora, for the glitter of morning is in the Vedas. Darkness is conceived as a sea over which man is shipped to the farther shore, which is the thin day line in the sky. Night is the jailer of day, but at last there is a signalling of the "flags of the morning,"[4] and dawn comes forth again decking herself like a dancer. Even the Aswins or morning rays are personified as a kind of golden horsemen riding the steeds of morn. But no religion has been created merely out of joy and light. Rather all religions have come out of midnight and suffering, and their history is mainly the history of human fear. Hence in the Vedic system, as in the kindred religion of Iran, there is also expressed an intense feeling of the dual and doubtful character of human experience. For it began to be asked, what if, after all, the gods, of their own free will, withhold their blessings from men? As this fear took possession of

[1] Rig-Veda, v. 59, 4.
[2] Ibid., vii. 63, 1.
[3] Ibid., i. 35, 2.
[4] Bergaigne, vol. i. p. 244.

the worshipper he no longer looked his gods in the face, but began to prostrate himself. The idea of atonement began to be developed. The god ceases to co-operate with man. From being an ally man has become a suppliant, and the sacrifice is now expiatory. When the showers are withheld and the crops and the cattle are dying, even Indra begins to be suspected, and assumes the rôle of a punitive god. In the Vedas sin is actually conceived as a debt which requires liquidation. And there is a remarkable hymn to Varuna which has the tone of one of the penitential psalms of the Hebrews.[1] The fact that the phallic worship of the Dasyus is spoken of in the Vedas with disgust and horror[2] is no doubt a sign of the genuine superiority of the civilisation which had suddenly entered India. Nevertheless, savage elements lay within Vedic religion. There are some dark passages in the songs which prove that, in order to appease angry gods, even human sacrifice was offered.[3] In certain rites, for instance, man is numbered with the horse, the ox, the sheep, and the goat as a victim; and, as we shall see, this monstrous element reappeared late in the religions of the West. Again, in the Vedas every natural effect has a supernatural meaning and is the signal of friendship or of hostility to man. But the effects were so multitudinous and contradictory that the imagination, baffled and dazzled, began to see raging among the gods a conflict similar to the conflict raging among men. For instance, Indra not merely slays his father Tvashtri, and dethrones Varuna as Zeus dethrones Kronos, but he is in conflict with the Maruts or storm gods who were his lieutenants. In one very remarkable hymn the worshippers are troubled by the fear that by sacrificing to Indra they may offend the Maruts, and

[1] Rig-Veda, i. 25. [2] Ibid., vii. 21, 5.
[3] Ibid., x. 90, 15.

that by sacrificing to the Maruts they may offend Indra. "I am afraid of this Powerful one (*i.e.* Indra), and trembling before him. For *you* (*i.e.* the Maruts) the offerings were prepared—we have now put them away, forgive us!"[1] In the last sentence the distracted worshipper whispers a kind of *aside* to the storm gods in the hope that Indra may not hear him. This hesitation as to the proper distribution of worship has followed the human mind throughout the variations of its idolatry, and even to-day troubles many a devout Roman Catholic in the adoration of his saints. But it was precisely because worship became more intricate, and because ritualistic error began to be conceived as involving danger to the worshipper, because offence to the gods, that a priesthood arose and became omnipotent. And with the priesthood came caste and slavery.

9. We may well believe that the Asiatic Aryans, like those European peoples who spoke kindred languages and lived under similar institutions, possessed priests or Brahmans from the earliest times. The word Brahman is even supposed to be etymologically equivalent to the Latin *flamen*.[2] Whereas, however, the Greeks and the Latins separated priestly from political functions, the Celts and the Hindus lived long under theocratic government. The Brahmans, indeed, were the Druids of India. But the view according to which the Vedic hymns were merely the expression of the private emotions of a caste cannot be correct. As we have seen, the oldest of these hymns are really the chronicles of a race, and their utterance is far too massive to be considered as the work of religious dilettantism. It is only the later Vedic literature which betrays signs of artificial creation, but the early songs were sung by the actual leaders of the people.

[1] Rig-Veda, i. 171, 4.
[2] Wackernagel, pp. 31, 32. "Es gab Brahmanen bevor es Inder gab."

It was only gradually that the priesthood developed into a close bureaucracy to which even the kings were compelled to do homage. We have no means of discovering either the date of the Vedas[1] or of the rise of the Brahmanical tyranny, or of the origin of caste. That caste, however, followed the conquest there can be no doubt at all. Among the Aryans themselves there was originally no caste. But after they had entered India a new social organisation became necessary. A system for the benefit of the victors at the expense of the vanquished was devised, and the Dasyus became the Sudras of the later period. It is impossible to believe that even in the earliest stages of the Aryan conquest the relations between the invaders and the native population were left indefinite. The religious intolerance of the hymns, and the fact that the Dasyus are conceived as enemies of the Vedic gods, imply that from the beginning the rigour of the new dominion must have been severely felt. *Várṇa*, which first meant the dark colour of the native peoples, later meant caste, and continued to be used in that sense long after the invaders had ceased to be a white race. There is a hymn which indicates that a social hierarchy was being evolved at a very early date, for the dawn is described as wakening the various classes of men to the work of the day, and the last to be mentioned are the servile population.[2] It is true that many of the best authorities believe that the famous hymn in which the origin of the castes is mentioned was a fraudulent and comparatively modern interpolation for political purposes. But a custom is often long established before its origin is discussed, or its justification attempted, and

[1] Oldenberg (p. 1) appears to place the date of the earliest hymns as late as 1200 B.C. Even if this date could be proved to be approximately correct, we do not know how much of the earliest religious literature had already perished, since none of it was written.

[2] I. 113, 6. *Cf.* Ludwig, vol. iii. pp. 211, 243.

many centuries had passed before Hindu writers began to work out a philosophic explanation of slavery.[1] There can be no doubt that the priests early separated themselves from the rest of the people, and enjoyed the privileges of their position as mediators between gods and men. It is specially significant, for instance, that sins against the gods began to be considered as sins against the priests. The Dákshinâ, or sacrificial gift, became more and more prominent as an indispensable part of the ritual. A struggle between Church and State—if the phrase be permitted—can be traced throughout the Vedas, and Brahmanism early created enemies against itself even within the Aryan people. There is a remarkable hymn in which Agni is implored to protect the altars and sacrifices against assailants and weavers of spells. Witchcraft and astrology were already busy, and it became necessary to protect Vedic religion, not only against the impure worship of the Dasyus but against rival Aryan theories and beliefs. If in some very early period each father was priest for his own family, it now became a crime for any but a Brahman to approach the altars. And with the development of priestcraft and of ritual we discover a steady intellectual degeneration. The lyrical quality of the Vedas is gradually replaced by a dead formalism and a stagnant orthodoxy. The age of scholasticism at last arrived, and indeed there is a true analogy between the development of the Christian Church and of the Hindu hierarchy. In both a priesthood became omnipotent, and hindered the progress of the world. The priesthood has invariably been a religious syndicate representing vested interests. "Thou, O Agni, protectest on every side like well-stitched armour the man who gives sacrificial fees. He who puts sweet food before the priests, who makes them

[1] *Cf.* the Bhagavad Gītā, xviii. 41.

comfortable in his dwelling, who kills living victims, he will reside high in heaven."[1] These words betray the existence of a dangerous class of active parasites whose interests had become opposed to the interests of an entire community. The subsequent history of mankind in all its aspects was to evolve in the same endless cycle. Loyalty to the Brahmans became the test of orthodoxy. In the later Atharvaveda recipes for the spiritual life were replaced by recipes for the "Brahmandana" or dish of good things which was served to the priests by the faithful. Intellectual sterility had set in, and instead of the early manly songs of the leaders of the people we are given dead commentaries. If we contrast the spontaneity of the primitive Vedas with the opening of Sankara's commentary on the Vedânta-Sûtras, we shall be able to measure the amount of change.[2] And yet it was ages before Sankara's date that Buddha had attempted to transform Brahmanism from a dead to a living religion. The Brahmans had gained the hegemony, and threatened the interests even of the warrior and the mercantile classes, but their quarrels need not detain us here. We are more concerned in the fact that all three classes were united in a common tyranny over the Sudra or slave population.

10. When peoples were still in their tribal formation freedom was necessary to every member of the tribe. If the entire community required to be mobile no individual could be fettered. Herdsmen must be at least as free as the cattle they tend and follow from

[1] I. 31.

[2] "It is a matter not requiring any proof," says Sankara, "that the object and the subject whose respective spheres are the notions of the 'Thou' (the *non-ego*) and the *Ego*, and are opposed to each other as much as darkness and light are, cannot be identified" (*Vedânta-Sûtras*, part i.). Philosophers are still discussing the question.

pasture to pasture. And even in the industrial organisation of Rome, when slavery formed the basis of human society, the shepherds remained comparatively free. Thus as long as primitive communities were mobile they enjoyed collective liberty, and Rousseau's rough guess was apparently not altogether wrong.[1] But as soon as men settled upon the soil and consolidated their social relations a new era began. It was only when the Aryans had arrived in inner India, and found themselves surrounded by a swarming and degraded population, that the instinct of self-preservation suggested the need of a rigorous dominion. The conquerors, conscious of their mental and physical superiority, displayed a horror of contact with the inferior race. In order to tame and organise a vast aboriginal population they determined on their social subjection. The entire people were declared to be the slaves of their conquerors, and a religious dogma was made the basis of a political expedient. "O Soma (the Dionysus of the Aryans), give us riches in gold, in horses, in cows, and in *men*." Here it is evident that the traffic in human beings had begun, and during centuries it was to provide the industrial basis of civilisation. Thus in the Vedic hymn which pretends to give the origin of the division of human labour we are presented with a crude myth according to which the priest or Brahman issued from Brahma's head, the Kshatriya or warrior from his arm, the Vaisya or husbandman from his thigh, but from his feet the Sudra.[2] And this dogma was made the basis not merely of all sacerdotal pretensions and privileges, but of that system of caste which has hypnotised India for ages. But wherever we go in ancient history we discover the same ground-plan of

[1] "L'homme est né libre, et partout il est dans les fers" (*Du Contrat Social*, Bk. I. ch. i.).

[2] X. 90.

human society. On the one hand there is a free minority, and on the other a majority enslaved. We trace the slave in all his disguises from Asia into Europe whether he be called Sudra or helot, servus or serf.

11. The real meaning of the word Sudra is unknown, but it is supposed to have been the name of the natives of Hindustan and the Dekkan. It may have belonged to the tribes first conquered by the Aryans, but was made to include all the dark races upon whom the Aryan yoke was placed. It was the duty of a Sudra "to humble himself at the Brahman's feet." The Brahman gained his living by his priestly office, the Kshatriya or warrior by war, the Vaisya by trade and husbandry, and the Sudra by "servile attendance." The barriers between the castes were insurmountable, and the penalties for any attempt to overleap them were of extreme severity. In no system has class hatred been so thoroughly organised, for pride of race ceased to unite even the Aryans. Society was split into isolated groups. The early flexible community disappeared, and a gloomy régime took its place. The Sudra was forbidden to be instructed, or to hear the scriptures, or to be present at the sacrifices. All that he touched became contaminated. He was so low in the scale of being that the gods refused to speak with him. When a priest was about to make an offering he was forbidden to converse with a Sudra, and was compelled to communicate his orders by means of a third person.[1] Such a social or unsocial system never could have arisen spontaneously in any primitive society. Caste and slavery were invariably the results of conquest.

12. In the Laws of Manu we are presented with a vivid picture of this social organisation of early Hindustan. It is true that that code is no longer considered

[1] Weber, *Indische Studien*, Zehnter Band, p. 11.

to be as ancient as the first Sanskrit scholars supposed. Some of them did not hesitate to assign to it the date 880 B.C.[1] Modern investigation, however, has proved that in its present form the work is the recast of an earlier version. Some writers maintain that it was compiled "between about 1 A.D. and 500 A.D."[2] Both the language and the form of the work betray signs of a late development of Hindu culture. It seems to have been forgotten, however, that this fact only proves the permanence of the Hindu system and the long consolidation of Brahmanical tyranny. Among all primitive peoples their earliest laws were handed down not in documents but by oral tradition. Thus the date of the written form of the Institutes of Manu was certainly not the date of the origin of Hindu law. As a matter of fact, in the book itself there is the clearest distinction between "the revealed texts and the sacred tradition" (Manu, i. 108). The present text was not certainly the first, but the best and clearest statement of the traditional law and custom. Hence the more modern its form the more ancient is its substance. The geographical allusions scattered throughout its twelve books prove, likewise, that the Brahmanical system began to operate in all its rigour only after the Aryans had descended into India—in other words, after the conquest. The question of its authorship does not concern us. But there is the clearest evidence that the work is a restatement of traditional principles. It must not be forgotten, however, that the Code of Manu did not apply to the whole of India, and that in ancient as in modern times local custom was frequently made the basis of legal decisions. Moreover, laws stagnate and grow obsolete while society moves and changes, and a usage may have died out long before the law which gave it expression was finally expunged.

[1] Sir Wm. Jones, vol. ii. p. 11.

[2] Burnell, p. 24.

Nevertheless, whether the Code of Manu belongs to a more modern or to a more ancient date, the state of society which it depicts was once actually realised. Wherever there were Sudras they were treated in the manner it prescribes. And the most modern scholarship declares that those portions relating to the castes are the recension of ancient and genuine enactments.

13. According to the Laws of Manu there are slaves of seven kinds—(1) he who is made a captive in war, (2) he who serves for his daily food, (3) he who is born in the house, (4) he who is bought, (5) he who is given, (6) he who is inherited from ancestors, and (7) he who is enslaved by way of punishment (viii. 415). These were to be the sources of slavery during many ages, and they were to be drawn upon in every part of the world. In Hindustan as at Rome slaves could hold no property. "The wealth which they earn is acquired for him to whom they belong" (viii. 416). Moreover, "a Sudra, whether bought or unbought, the Brahman may compel to work; for he was created by the Self Existent to be a slave. A Sudra, though emancipated by his master, is not released from servitude: since it is innate in him no one can set him free from it" (viii. 413, 414). When the Sudra is born the name given to him should express something contemptible (ii. 31). He is born only to serve his master. "One occupation only the Lord prescribed to the Sudra, to serve meekly the three castes" (i. 91). When in trouble he is not to receive advice; when hungry he is not to be fed; and he is never to be educated (iv. 80). In another statute he is allowed "the remnants of an Aryan's meal" (v. 140). This is his reward "for living according to the Law." There were two degrees of degradation. The Sudra was regarded, first, as general representative of his class, irrespective of his master, in which case he is

the abject slave of the higher castes, his touch is unholy, and his presence an abomination; second, as the servant of a particular master in whose house he may have been born, and whose compassion he may succeed in moving and winning. But in both cases the Sudras were in perpetual jeopardy, and were outcasts from justice. Although permitted to give evidence in a court of law, their evidence was considered to be of no value if it happened to be impugned by a member of the higher castes. Whereas if a Sudra committed a crime he was punished with ingenious cruelty, a Brahman guilty of the same misdemeanour was discharged on payment of an easy fine. Again, an injury done to a person of high rank was penalised by the utmost severity, but the same injury done to a person of lower rank was scarcely punished at all. This principle reappeared and lingered very late even in Western civilisation. For in England in the eighteenth century a crime committed against a nobleman was considered by great legal authorities like Blackstone to be more outrageous than if committed against a person of humble rank. In Hindustan, again, whereas a libel by a Brahman was compounded by a small fine, the Sudra if guilty of insult was condemned to have his tongue cut out (viii. 270). In Hindustan the entire penal system was based on the principle that that member of the human body by means of which the offence had been given should be destroyed. If, for example, the Sudra spoke contemptuously to any member of the upper classes, "an iron nail ten fingers long shall be thrust red-hot into his mouth" (viii. 271). And yet the language of the Brahman to the Sudra possessed no other quality except contempt. If a Sudra "arrogantly teaches a Brahman his duty the king shall cause hot oil to be poured into the offender's mouth and ears" (viii.

272). Or else the punishment for insolence was the removal of both lips (viii. 282). But if a Brahman be guilty of insult he shall suffer only "the lowest amercement" (viii. 276). The hands of thieves were cut off. A Sudra guilty of adultery "shall be burned on a red-hot iron bed: they shall put logs under it until the sinner is burned to death" (viii. 372). On the other hand, moral irregularities were, within certain bounds, permitted to the higher castes. In short, a powerful minority held an entire people in shackles. The Sudra's social condition was stagnant and hopeless for ever. The colour which he wore as symbolic of his station was black (Krishná), and it was the colour of his destiny. Such laws indicate how great had been the accumulation of wrong and how degraded had become all social instincts since the day when the free Aryan communities marched together into India. The reaction against the doctrines of Rousseau blinded his antagonists to a general truth which underlay his social theory. Dispassionate inquirers have since discovered that humanity has been required to pay, and has been paying for centuries, an enormous penalty for the acquisition of its wealth and the organisation of its labour.

14. It was early in history that a grand dilemma was placed before mankind. Either men were to wander over the earth's surface as individuals or in scattered families incapable of union, and vowed, like the animals, to constant decimation. Doubtless in that case they might have enjoyed the wildest freedom, but it would have been the degraded and precarious freedom of animals. Humanity would have become a mere series of stagnant groups, or rather there would have been no humanity at all. Or, on the other hand, the forces of cohesion might play their part; men might unite in order to cope with nature and to destroy or to tame the

animals and to clear the earth for a human settlement. In that case freedom would certainly be restricted, and social subordination would become necessary. But subordination would be followed by insubordination, and there would begin that conflict of wills of which history is the actual record. Man made his choice wisely, but as soon as it was made problems were created which have not yet found their solution. A hierarchy of powers became forthwith visible, upper and under, stronger and weaker, ruler and ruled, victor and vanquished. Slavery was the first rude discipline in that combined labour which had become necessary if man were to be capable of holding the place which he had already won in the world. It is really doubtful whether the foundations of industry could have been laid in any other way. Standing in the present and looking back at the past, it is easy to say that the course of human history might have been different. But given immense hordes oscillating over the earth's surface, plundering like animals, and already the slaves of instincts not yet human, we may well ask how order was to be brought out of such a chaos. Civilisation begins with the crack of the slave whip. It was the first frantic effort of the human race to organise itself, and thus history presents us with a great problem in casuistry. As if to prove, however, that within all her realism an idealism lies embedded, she presents us with contradictions even in her rudest phases. We are startled to find that in what must have been a terrible age the human mind was actually groping after justice. And in digging at the roots of those vanished civilisations we have to remember that mankind had only emerged from chaos, and that one day our own social system may be judged to have been relatively as imperfect if not as unjust.

15. There appears to be no evidence in the Laws of

Manu that the Sudras were, like the Helots in Sparta, slaves of the State. Emigration was forbidden to the higher castes, whereas Sudras unattached to masters were permitted to move from place to place. But this privilege can have meant nothing, because wherever he went the Sudra carried with him the bann of excommunication from human rights. It has been said that his condition was more endurable than that of the public slaves of ancient republics, and even than that of the villeins of the middle ages.[1] Yet if it were possible to devise an instrument for the measurement of misery, the sufferings of the Sudra would certainly be found to have been excessive. It is at least true, however, that the Sudras possessed rights within their own caste and claims against each other. Moreover, beneath them there were human beings in still deeper degradation.

16. There was no fifth caste, but the lowest level of Hindu civilisation was occupied by the Pariahs or mixed offspring of the Sudras and the higher castes. In the Laws of Manu the expression of horror and contempt for this breed could not be exceeded. The punishment inflicted on a Sudra who loved or attempted to marry a woman of the higher castes was of the utmost cruelty, and is unmentionable. Even for a Brahman who married a Sudra woman there was no expiation (iii. 19). It is in the Tenth Book of the Laws that the most extraordinary invective is poured upon the outcasts, who are described as "the lowest of men" (x. 16). In order to keep their own physical type vigorous and pure, the Aryans were tempted to drive the mixed race outside humanity. The Kandâla was the son of a Brahman woman and a Sudra, and he was "excluded from the Aryan community" (x. 30). "I once saw a high-caste Hindu dash an earthen jar of milk upon the ground merely because

[1] Elphinstone, p. 19.

the shadow of a Pariah had fallen upon it as he passed."[1] If such an incident could happen in the nineteenth century, we can imagine how bitter must have been the fate of the Pariah in an age when his mere existence was considered a crime. "Their wealth shall be dogs and donkeys," says Manu, "their dress shall be the garments of the dead, black iron shall be their ornaments, and they shall be everlasting wanderers" (x. 52). The outcast was "to eat food in a broken dish," and to be employed in the burial-grounds (x. 39, 54). Such passages indicate that a vast moral problem had been created, and that the instincts of sex had overleaped the instincts of race. Nature was cunningly attempting to efface racial divergences by a new combination, and everything is explained when we hear that women of the dark race entered the houses of Aryans as slaves. And yet in the history of social hierarchies nothing is more remarkable than the tenacity with which the Brahmanical caste maintained its isolation and the purity of its blood. No doubt the punishment of such isolation is always sterility, but we can at least understand the motives which raised artificial barriers against the intrusion of lower racial influences. In spite of the elaborate mechanism of precaution, however, silent causes were already at work stealing away the energy of the Aryan people. Even the gods of the dark race began to win their way into the Vedic Pantheon, and Siva, the god of passion, as well as other strange gods received Aryan worship. The atmosphere steadily grew more gloomy and sultry. As mankind drew closer to each other a sense of mutual suspicion began to develop. There are some striking phrases in Manu describing the character of man, who is declared to be the possessor of "a body gloomy with passion and perishable" (vi. 76, 77). The misfortunes of humanity

[1] "India and the Hindoos," Ward, p. 259.

must have grown apace, else this curious and tentative theory of suicide for helpless men would never have been suggested: "He who leaves this body (be it by necessity) as a tree torn from a river-bank, or freely like a bird that quits a tree, is delivered from the misery of this dreadful world, dreadful like a shark" (vi. 78). The human struggle had certainly begun in earnest, and already there was almost a sense of exhaustion. The whole abundant earth—Asia and Africa, America and Europe—lay before the human race, but ages would pass before men would even begin to ask why in so rich a world there should be any misery at all. In the attempt to produce a social harmony mankind began with this scheme of discord. Thus in the early history of labour we catch glimpses of a being "dressed in the garments of the dead," and "eating his food out of a broken dish," overpowered by fatigue and maddened by injustice. To the struggle against nature was added the far more poignant struggle of man against man. And the confused experiment of the nations to-day still betrays the long lines of human continuity, and is handicapped by the first errors.

17. Nevertheless, even in its most vindictive stage human nature foreshadowed the route along which it must finally develop. The Laws of Manu would be the most terrible of all documents unless they contained the promise of more ideal conditions which even yet are unrealised. It is not the function of the historian to attempt to reconcile the moral contradictions which he discovers in the civilisation of different eras. Rather, it is his duty to emphasise them because they indicated the need of progress and the germs of justice. Thus in Manu there are even the rudiments of a theory of right. It is certainly startling to discover signs of the clearest perception of individual and even of national obligations

side by side with expressions of racial fury. We are told, for instance, that if the great middle class and the Sudras beneath them "swerved from their duties for a moment they would throw this whole world into confusion" (vii. 418). The modern reader is surprised that this recognition that the burden of the structure of society was being borne by a single class was not accompanied by an acknowledgment of corresponding rights. On the contrary, "the Brahman may confidently seize the goods of his slave" (viii. 417). Again, the Sudra's life was valued at the price of a cat, a blue jay, a dog, and a crow (xi. 132). And yet "charity" is commanded "to every man who knows the Law" (ix. 202). Whereas the rate of interest was for a Brahman two per cent. per month, for a man of the warrior class three, and for a husbandman four, it was five for a Sudra. The minds of the early lawgivers oscillated strangely between injustice and justice, but now and again they expressed tolerant and even humane ideas which might find a place in later ethics. In Manu, for instance, there is an earnest attempt to create a system of evidence in order to discover the truth in disputed cases. There is a naïve statute relating to theft, and it ordains that "on failure of witnesses, the judge shall actually deposit gold with the defendant under some pretext or other, by means of spies of suitable age and appearance, and shall afterwards demand it back. If the defendant restores it in the manner and shape in which it was bailed, there is nothing of that description in his hands for which others accuse him" (viii. 182, 183). Men are forbidden to do injury to living creatures. They are warned that "the only friend who follows a man after death is justice" (viii. 17). There are even statutes which modern societies might imitate with advantage, as, for instance, the law which forbade marriages between

persons suffering from such diseases as phthisis (iii. 7). The honour and safety of women are guaranteed (iii. 55, 56, 57). Renunciation and the control of the senses are enjoined. "Behaviour unworthy of an Aryan, harshness, cruelty, and habitual neglect of the prescribed duties betray a man of impure origin" (x. 58). The Aryan nobleness had not altogether been lost. A man is encouraged "not to despise himself on account of former failures: until death let him seek fortune, nor despair of gaining it." (Was the Sudra included?) "Let him say what is true, for that is the eternal law" (iv. 137, 138). Finally, chivalry is commanded; in war no poisoned weapons are to be used, and no insults are to be addressed to a fallen enemy (vii. 90).

18. We are thus able to discern faint rays of justice even in the stormy dawn of history. In the later literature we even find penitential formulæ in which forgiveness is asked for sins committed against Sudras, but such prayers are of the nature of a deathbed repentance. As in the ages of chivalry, courtesy and humane treatment were reserved only for those of high rank while common prisoners of war were treated with habitual cruelty, so those chivalrous precepts of Manu were never meant for the Sudra. That the enslaved race endured oppression so long is no doubt partly to be explained by that strange Oriental passivity and fatalism which is, in some measure, shared by only one European people, the Slavs. Centuries of subjection produced that vast stupor and stagnation from which India has not yet awakened, while Russia has only lately moved uneasily in her sleep. India has never been a unity, and has never possessed a political consciousness. Her movement has been the movement of a somnambulist who is guided by other hands. Or she has been like an exhausted organism, fed artificially with oxygen from without. And yet a means of deliverance

was offered to her from within herself long before she became the prey of successive conquerors. It was precisely because she rejected the reformation preached by Buddha that her inner organisation on a basis of justice became impossible and that her conquest became easy. It was after Buddhism had been driven out that the great Mohammedan invasion began. No land has suffered from such a rapid succession of invaders, and the cause is certainly to be found in that social system of which the Laws of Manu are the most brutal expression. The Northern Plain, between the Himálayas and the Vindhya range, was the boulevard of conquest, but it was precisely there that Brahmanism failed to create the forces that should have withstood invasion. We discover within Hindustan at the date of Buddha two great social facts which reappear in every civilisation. Every society has been founded upon labour, and has invariably tended towards luxury. It is in the distribution of luxury and labour that all social problems arise, and it is upon their adjustment that the larger part of the destinies of states depends. Now, the Laws of Manu indicate the growing antagonism of those two principles and the social deadlock which was the result. In other words, the Hindu organisation was one of the first great failures in that prolonged social experiment in which the world is still engaged. A society so constituted, or rather so dislocated, could never survive its own inner disorders or the attack of external foes. There was no co-operation within the diverse ruling racial groups, and there was no co-operation between them. No doubt we must add to the causes of the exhaustion of ancient civilisations the errors of their economic as well as those of their moral systems. Who, for instance, can measure the frightful waste which primitive methods of agriculture and trade involved? But since that handicap was, on the whole,

common to them all, it is rather in their social organisations that we must look for the reasons of their ruin. When the great protest of Buddhism was made, Hindustan was divided into a series of independent despotisms, which rested upon a common basis of slavery. A great gulf was fixed between the governing and the governed. Luxury had corrupted the one class, while labour and poverty had overwhelmed the other, and, exhausted by these unnatural conditions, both at last fell before the invader. That is the fundamental and somewhat monotonous truth to which we shall be compelled to give frequent expression in these chapters devoted to the fall of States.

19. Like all great moral reformations, Buddhism was a movement away from tyranny and luxury and exclusiveness towards liberty and co-operation. With its purely speculative and religious doctrines we are not here concerned, but we may note that their peculiar sadness is to be explained by the condition of Hindustan. They were the outcome of a vast accumulation of social pain. The doctrine of Nirvana, the cry for delivery from existence, the belief that man's life is illusion and his real destiny emptiness, were all the natural outcome of a keen sensibility brooding over the woes of India. Buddhism was an attempt to explain the tragedy of existence, but the tragedy was local. It was specially Indian, and arose within a society founded upon such legal principles as we find in Manu. Buddha was a revolutionary, and it is significant that his awakening was first caused by the spectacle of poverty. No doubt there had been attempts at reform before his day. But whereas, for instance, Kapila had been content to develop, still within the limits of Brahmanism, a merely speculative and rationalistic doctrine, Buddha came out of Brahmanism in order to face the people. Unconsciously

or not, Câkyamuni attacked an entire political system. The fact that he *preached* is of great significance. No one had ever preached. It was the first great appeal to humanity. The gravest charge, indeed, which the Brahmans advanced against Buddha was precisely that he sought disciples among all sorts and conditions of men, even among those who were sunk in misery. The beautiful legends which gathered round him prove that it was the common people he had most deeply influenced, because he had first been touched by their sorrows. Thus it was said that once lamps were lit in Buddha's honour, but that while those of kings, princes, and the great of the land soon went out, only the lamp of a poor widow burned all night. Again, Ânanda, the disciple and cousin of Buddha, met a maid at a well and asked her for a cup of water. But she replied that since she belonged to a low caste she could not dare to offer him a drink. "My sister," replied Ânanda, "I did not ask to what caste or to what family you belong, but only for a cup of water." Stories like these prove how great a revolution had been created by the genius of one man, and it is no surprise that the Brahmans met the new Indian evangel with persistent persecution. Buddha gave special directions for the treatment of slaves. When sick they were to be freed from work and to be provided with medicine. A new life had been made possible for the Sudra. "When the master," ordained Buddha, "has any agreeable and savoury food he must not consume the whole himself, but must offer a portion to others, even to his slaves; and if they work faithfully during a long period, they should be set free." He announced that his law was a law of grace for all. "I," he said, "am the master of compassion."[1] It is certainly difficult to share Vassilief's scepticism regarding his personal

[1] Burnouf, *Le Lotus de la Bonne Loi*, p. 282.

influence. No doubt the elaborate development of Buddhism took place long after his death, and its late forms in Tibet and Ceylon were never the work of Buddha. Lamaism was practically a new religion, a kind of Asiatic catholicism, with monks and monasteries, mendicity and mendacity. But Buddha was something more than the mere founder of a mendicant brotherhood.[1] What Vassilief calls the "intellectual organisation" of the system marks rather the beginnings of the system's decline. Buddha's appeal was moral, and his propagandism was certainly not militant, but worked silently like a leaven. That, according to Vassilief, he suffered persecution, especially towards his life's close, is a proof of the formidable proportions which his anti-Brahmanical crusade had already attained. To have been able to reclaim a great portion of India from Brahmanism, Buddha cannot have been a mere figure vanishing before the storm. It was precisely because his appeal was far more moral and social than intellectual that it was feared by the Brahmans. Whereas, according to their doctrine, which was really a political system in disguise, the social order should be fixed and unalterable, Buddha perceived that that is true of nothing in the world. Not immobility but mobility is the fundamental fact in human as in all other things. The order of society changes, and the hierarchies of one age disappear in the next. Everything is passing away; everything is part of a disappearing procession. This insistence on the flux of life and of nature, which in the mouth of a modern moralist would be a platitude, was in the age of Buddha a discovery and a challenge. It was an attack upon a hierarchy which had supposed itself to be permanent and impregnable. But it was neither open nor direct. Buddha, it must be admitted, made no definite assault

[1] Vassilief, p. 15.

upon the dogma of slavery and caste. No more did Christianity. St. Paul took slavery for granted, and even acquiesced in it.[1] But Buddha said that caste was a matter of no importance. So subtle and dangerous a doctrine involved the destruction of the blasphemous fiction which had separated man from man. For that doctrine was a humanism in which all social differences were lost. The fact that Buddha accepted disciples from all the castes was sufficient to destroy the barriers which divided them, because there was thus created a higher spiritual unity in which they were all merged. The true Buddhist contempt for the old hierarchy is perhaps best seen in a vigorous denunciation of caste by the Buddhist writer Ashu Ghosha. In an argument directed against the Brahmans he says boldly: "The doctrine of the four castes is false. All men are of one caste. I never heard that the foot of a Kshatriya was different from that of a Brahman or that of a Sudra."[2]

20. Buddhism, however, was not destined to be the regenerative and cohesive force of India. That, in spite of its speculative basis, it was capable not merely of genuine social amelioration but of political construction, is proved by the fact that the dynasty of Chandra Gupta, which consolidated Hindustan, produced the Buddhist emperor Asoka, who was India's most enlightened ruler. But Brahmanism was never really overthrown, and in the end the vested interests of despotism prevailed. In the eighth and the ninth centuries of our era so terrible was the persecution that Buddhism was utterly destroyed; although, indeed, its destruction was hurried by its own decay. The fact that the history of Buddhism in India is so obscure may be taken as a sign that the new religion

[1] *Cf.* Rom. xiii. 5; Eph. vi. 5.

[2] "A Disputation concerning Caste," translated by B. H. Hodgson (*Essays*, p. 131).

had never become a really dynamic element in Indian life. No Buddhist emperor appears to have played the part of Constantine. And although Buddhism became a State religion, it displayed no vitality when the State became hostile to it. We can only guess that in some cases the doctrine of non-resistance may have been actually carried out. Unlike the Christian Church, Buddhism did not organise itself as a military power. And it does not appear to have possessed the moral strength to withstand persecution. This collapse of spiritual forces, whether caused by outer or by inner enemies, is the most tragic fact in human history. A great man bequeaths to his followers a doctrine which gradually dies. The one great moral force which might have made a nation out of scattered groups, and united them in face of the invader, was irrevocably crushed. Brahmanism again triumphed, but not long. At the very moment when Buddhism was being driven out, there was already in motion a power which has left the deepest marks of conquest upon India, and that power was Mohammedan. It is very remarkable that the two greatest religions of Asia, which were also the two greatest regenerative forces in the world, were uprooted from the soil in which they first grew. Just as we do not go to Palestine in order to find the Christian religion, so it is not in India that Buddhism can be any longer discovered. Christ passed out of Asia to become a Voice in Europe, and Buddha was driven from India into other lands where his doctrine suffered grotesque change. It was the warrior Mahomet, the man of military and practical energy, who made most progress in Asia and became Buddha's formidable foe. Yet it is not improbable that if Buddhism had been allowed to cope with the chaos of India from the death of Buddha until 1000 A.D. there would have

arisen a great people who would have withstood not only the Tartar and Mohammedan invasions from the north, but the attack of Europe from the south and the sea. But the moment for the creation of a people had already been lost, and when the day of danger came India was split into helpless groups. No doubt men like Chandra Gupta and Vikramáditya won great victories, but India has never offered widely organised resistance. Alexander advanced without a struggle into the Punjab, and Mahmud and Tamerlane found the road as easy. What interest had the Sudras in the issue of battle? A great apathy and somnolence had destroyed all energy. A nation of slaves was called upon to fight a nation of freemen, for the Mohammedans were free. They were exempt from caste. A people governed by laws such as the Laws of Manu were compelled to fight a people whose laws were so just that we are told that "in affording strict and accurate definitions of the rights of the individual, the three systems of law, Roman, English, and Mohammedan, are not very far from being on a level."[1] In other words, a people enjoying a certain measure of that justice for which Buddha pled conquered India. How momentous the result of that conquest was destined to be may be measured by the fact that to-day India contains 62,458,077 Mohammedans.[2] It is, however, no part of our task to describe the invasions which during centuries broke upon her and covered her like tides. Enough if we have seen the reasons why, even to-day, her organisation depends upon a foreign Power, and why, if that Power were withdrawn, the old chaos would return. It was that chaos which invited attack. The one chance of inner development and inner control was lost when the reformation of Buddha was rejected.

[1] Mill, vol. ii. p. 354.

[2] Census of the Empire, 1906.

Ever since, India has been a battle-ground, and the world knows that it will be a battle-ground in the future. But there seems meantime to be a genuine grandeur in the task of England when we remember that she, whose language and institutions can be traced to centres out of which the institutions and the language of India's earliest invaders likewise came, has, by one of the mysterious cycles of history, been brought three thousand years later to the same soil in order to create a cosmos out of the chaos of ages. For the problem which faces her in India to-day is really the same problem which faced the Vedic peoples, only it is vaster because voluminous with centuries of error. And we do not know how her task can be fulfilled, or how she can repair the damage of innumerable tyrannies, unless the ideals of her own Christ and of Buddha, the Christ of India, are somehow united in her government.

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CHAPTER III

BABYLON

Any attempt to trace the continuity of human history involves some explanation of the great gap which separates Aryan civilisation in Hindustan from Aryan civilisation in Asia Minor and in south-eastern Europe. But that gap could hardly be filled merely by an account of the Iranians, the Medes, and the Persians—in other words, those peoples of Aryan race and speech who remained west of the Indus. Some writers, indeed, following Berosus, believe that the region of the Tigris and the Euphrates was under Aryan before it came under Semitic dominion. But there are no data, and the exact geographical distribution of Asiatic Aryans beyond the frontier of Hindustan remains unknown to us until the rise of Ecbatana. The real historical link between Eastern and Western civilisation is an alien Power, and that Power is Babylon.

2. Semitic cities had already grown old on the banks of the Euphrates and on the shores of the Persian Gulf long before the Vedic peoples were hovering on the threshold of Hindustan. In the Rig-Veda there is frequent mention of merchantmen called Paṇi, who brought trade to India, and they are supposed to have been Babylonians. And we are startled to find that once, although indeed only once, in Vedic literature the gold unit of Babylon, the *maneh*, is mentioned.[1] To

[1] Rig-Veda, viii. 78, 2

the Iranians the city was known as Bawri, and her civilising influence, especially in the form of the cuneiform writing, was probably felt long before the consolidation of the Achæmenian dynasty. The contact between Aryan and Semitic peoples in Western Asia appears, indeed, to have been frequent and close in prehistoric times. That they had known each other before history knew either of them is proved by the fact that words for the bull, the lion, gold, silver, and the vine are common to both.[1] But we do not know what precisely were the fortunes of the Aryan peoples before some of their powerful groups settled on the highlands south of the Caspian Sea and organised themselves into nations. Their descent into the valley of the Euphrates did not take place until Babylon had written her name deeply and vividly in the annals of mankind. During a period of at least four thousand years the main centre of civilisation was not Aryan but Semitic, and that centre was Babylonia. On the other hand, two of the most remarkable facts in the history of civilisation are—(1) that it was an Aryan by blood and speech, Cyaxares, King of Media, who destroyed Nineveh (606 B.C.); and (2) that it was another Aryan, Cyrus, King of Persia, who destroyed Babylon (539 B.C.). The destruction of those two cities opened a new era for mankind, and especially for Europe, and transferred the chief dominion of the world from the Semites to the Aryans. Even, however, although this collision between Aryan and

[1] Hommel, *Arier und Semiten*, p. 5. The remarkable list is as follows:—

Aryan, *staura*.	Old Semitic, *thauru*.	English, *bull*.
,, *karna*.	,, *karnu*.	,, *horn*.
,, *laiwan*.	,, *labiatu*.	,, *lion*.
,, *gharata*.	,, *charudu*.	,, *gold*.
,, *sirpara*.	,, *t'arpu*.	,, *silver*.
,, *waina*.	,, *waïnu*.	,, *wine*.

Semitic peoples had never occurred, the story of Babylon could not be left in isolation. Rather, the history of Europe would be unintelligible apart from the history of Babylon. She contributed during long ages the main current in the stream of human affairs. Compared with her duration and her influence the Aryan experiment in Western Asia, although dazzling, was brief. No doubt the Persians conquered Babylon, but they too lost their virility as quickly as their kinsmen in Hindustan. It was not to be on the lurid soil of Western Asia but in Europe, and at first in Greece and in Rome, that new Aryan energy would awake.

3. But the part played by Rome in the West had already been played by Babylon in the East. For reasons which will be explained she was the meeting-place of rival races. Western Asia, indeed, appears to have been a kind of clearing ground for the nations. During centuries a re-shuffling of empires took place in the region which lies between the Caucasus and the Persian Gulf, and it was especially in the valley of the Euphrates that the human race first endured a stern military discipline. The more we know of Babylon the less we become surprised that she did cast a strange spell upon all who had visited her or had heard the rumour of her streets. She threw her radius far over Palestine and into Egypt and across the Mediterranean. It appears that even Sargon I., her political founder, had reached Cyprus, whose inhabitants paid regular tribute. The Phœnicians were her servants, and the kings of India sent her gifts. She was the Brain of the East. The deeper we penetrate her history the more we become convinced that her influence was immense, and that it was based on a civilisation which reaches back to a dateless antiquity. One reason, among many, may be adduced to justify such a conclusion, and it is that

about 1500 B.C. the political and diplomatic language of the entire Orient was Babylonian. The official letters of the Egyptian kings to their vassals in Palestine and to the King of Babylon are written in the Babylonian language. But such a fact would have been impossible unless Babylon had become the centre of culture and of power, and she could never have attained that position without ages of preparation. An immemorial civilisation lay behind even *her* first appearance in history. It is not too much to say that by means of the excavations round and beneath her site and the sites of her vassal cities the length of human history has been doubled. If, as we now know, "there existed between the Tigris and the Euphrates a highly civilised nation as early as 5000 B.C.,"[1] then Greece and Rome are no longer the antiquity of the world but its middle age.

4. There are reasons for believing that even Egyptian civilisation had a Babylonian origin. Fundamental ideas underlying the mythology and the art of Egypt have been traced by some scholars to a Chaldæan source. For instance, the word *Nun*, which in early Chaldæa signified the divine source of all life, also appears in Egypt as *Nun*. The name of Eridu, the primitive seaport of Chaldæa, has the same meaning as Memphis ("City of the Good God"), and points to kindred religious conceptions. Besides, the most ancient form of the pyramid, a series of steps leading to an apex, is found on Babylonian soil. What is still more important is the fact that a close relationship has been discovered between the earliest form of Babylonian writing (which was not cuneiform but pictorial) and the Egyptian hieroglyphics.[2]

[1] Radau, p. 1.

[2] Hommel, *Geschichte*, pp. 13 *et sqq*. Boscawen points out ("The First of Empires," p. 94) that the Babylonian and the Egyptian systems are often fundamentally different, as, for instance, in the sign for water,

Such facts may not altogether justify the opinion that the Egyptians were colonists from Chaldæa, but they at least indicate a startling intimacy between the two peoples during a period which is prehistoric. Now, the majority of modern Egyptologists believe that the Egyptians came from Asia, but no one has supposed that the Babylonians came from Africa. Therefore it is at least improbable that Babylonian civilisation had an Egyptian origin. It is more likely that both were derived from a common and still more ancient source. But in any case Babylon, when she was at the apex of her power, imposed, as we have seen, even her language upon Egyptian diplomacy; and later, by means of Phœnicia and Egypt, she influenced Greece and the Western world.

5. But if she thus drew even distant peoples within her orbit, those countries which lay nearer came early within the current of her magnetism. There was a land in Southern Syria which felt the thrill, and that land was Canaan. The most recent discoveries have already proved that if the modern world desires to trace to their source many of its own fundamental religious conceptions, the most fruitful road of research leads, no doubt, through Israel but ends at Babylon. When we remember that the trade-routes between Assyria and Egypt cut through Canaan we shall better understand how easily a trade in ideas could spring up between Babylon and Israel. But, indeed, the Hebrew history itself admits that Abraham was a Babylonian and dwelt at Ur of the Chaldees. His language and his thoughts were, therefore, Babylonian. When Israel

which in Babylonian represents rain-drops and in Egyptian sea-waves. But just as dialects differ from each other although they may belong to the same family, so the variations of early hieroglyphic systems might be explained on the same principle.

was still young Babylon was already old, and it is not possible to believe that the younger people, who were originally Chaldæan colonists, could have thrown off the habits of ages or have remained isolated within an area already full of tradition. We have to remember two important facts. The first is that Babylon was not merely polytheistic, but that behind the changing multitude of her idols there was a fixed monotheistic belief. In the second place, Israel, on her own confession, wavered in her monotheism. Her religion, indeed, was the result of a struggle between opposing forces, and her greatest achievements were the intensification of the monotheistic idea and the rejection of polytheism. But, as Sayce remarks, the prayers of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, prove how narrow was the line which divided even *him* from monotheism. "O Lord," prayed Nebuchadnezzar to Merodach, God of Babylon, "thou that art from everlasting, lord of all that exists, for the King whom thou lovest, whom thou callest by name, as it seems good unto thee, thou guidest his name aright, thou watchest over him in the path of righteousness."[1] Now, Nebuchadnezzar reigned late at Babylon (604 B.C.–562 B.C.), and there had taken place that multiplication of gods and of altars which invariably accompanies a rich and imaginative mythology. But in the penitential psalms of the Sumerians, which are the earliest expression of Chaldæan faith, we find even a purer monotheism. Thus in a strophe and an antistrophe there occur the following words: "My blasphemies are innumerable, tear them like a veil. O my God, my sins are seven times seven."[2] Delitzsch certainly cannot be accused of exaggeration when he says

[1] Sayce, p. 262.

[2] Lenormant, *Lettres Assyriologiques*, Seconde Serie, vol. iii. pp. 153 *sqq*.

that those psalms breathe the same spirit as the psalms of David, and yet they are far older. On the other hand, there are abundant signs that early Israel had inherited Babylonian tradition. The biblical account of the Flood was preceded by a far more ancient Chaldæan narrative. The legend of the birth of Moses had already done service for Sargon I., the political founder of Babylon. The word Sinai, so organically connected with all that is most solemn in Hebrew religion, was derived from the name of the Babylonian moon god; and Nebô, the mountain where Moses died, was called after the Babylonian Mercury. Besides, as we shall see, the Laws of Moses, if not actually founded upon, were at least deeply influenced by a Babylonian code whose earliest form dates from an age in which Israel did not exist.

6. It cannot be said, therefore, that the history of Babylon is a mere matter of antiquarian interest. On the contrary, its study is of vital importance for understanding the progress of the world. A glance at her achievements in science and in art only strengthens this conviction. It was in Chaldæa that men first began to study the stars, and the Greek astronomers admitted that the Babylonians were their masters. The Chaldæan priests had already distinguished the fixed stars from the planets, had correctly calculated eclipses, and had seen the satellites of Saturn. They had worked out a complex system of mathematics, and were aware of the precession of the equinoxes. That they possessed some form of magnifying glass or telescope is proved by the discovery of a lens among the Assyrian ruins. They invented sundials, and their method of measuring time is still used by the modern world. It will, therefore, be allowed that when we reach Babylon we are on the high-road to Europe. Every new discovery among her vast

débris is a gain not merely to local but to universal history. She was so placed between India and the Mediterranean that she was the centre of the world and at the cross-roads of trade. The caravan routes from the shores of the Mediterranean and the great road from India through Ariana and Hecatompylos met beneath her walls. She was the Paris of the East. And it is little wonder if, when at last her end came, a cry went through the world which had feared her, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen!"[1]

7. But the chief reason why we must make some attempt to understand the history of Babylon is that it presents to us in a ruthless form that phase of social suffering, known as slavery, which was the common blot of all ancient civilisations. The metropolis of the Orient never attained her magnificence without immense physical labour, and so far as her Department of Public Works was concerned none of that labour was free. She was the great architect and engineer of the East, but her palaces and her temples, her walls and her canals, were the work of slaves. Each brick which is handled with curiosity by modern excavators was placed in position by a slave. A Hebrew prophet called Babylon "the hammer of the whole earth." She deported and enslaved entire communities. Her most ancient non-Semitic name was Tintira, or "The Seat of Life." But, as if to prove that the denunciations of the visionaries of Israel were not too violent, her own monuments and those of the Assyrians who were her sons have made us see how much human suffering was accumulated round her base. Judged by her waste of life, she seems rather to have been the seat of death.

8. Long before a brick of the city had been laid, there was a reason why men should congregate in the

[1] Isa. xxi. 9.

Land of Shinar. It was not merely that numerous important centres of religion and of trade had already been founded in northern and in southern Mesopotamia, but that the land itself invited human occupation. It was a well-watered plain lying between the mountains and the desert. If, indeed, the Euphrates had flowed, as at one point of its course it threatens to do, into the Mediterranean instead of into the Persian Gulf, the desert would have extended as far as the banks of the Tigris, and although there might have been a Nineveh, there would have been no Babylon. It is because both the Tigris and the Euphrates, starting from the same region, the Armenian mountains, and meeting at the same goal, the Persian Sea, enchain between them a tract of country which they continually enrich by their alluvial deposits that a soil was created which became the envy of the world. So rich was the land that, according to Quintus Curtius, cattle were not allowed to remain long at pasture.[1] It is the touch of the rivers which arrests the advance of the desert, or rather converts the desert into a land in which the legend of Paradise and of the Garden of God arose. At some points the desert, consisting of gravel and sand, lies only about thirty miles from the bed of the Euphrates, but between that river and the Tigris there is a region long famous for its extraordinary fertility. It was because Babylonia was a granary and a site for an empire that the human race crowded into it, and that it became the most densely populated district of the ancient world. Berosus tells us that it abounded in wheat, barley, the date-palm, apples, and most kinds of fruit. "Of all countries that we know," says Herodotus, "there is none so fruitful in grain. . . . The blade of the wheat and the barley is ofter four fingers in breadth. As for the millet and the sesame, I shall not say to what height

[1] Hist. Alex., v. I.

they grow, though within my own knowledge; for I am not ignorant that what I have already written concerning the fertility of Babylonia must seem incredible to those who have never visited the country."[1] Even to-day, when, owing to centuries of neglect and the destruction of the canals, the land has lapsed into the desert, it suddenly recuperates itself after the spring rains and is covered by verdure. So thickly grow the flowers that the hunting dogs are compelled to force their way through them, and when they issue from the long grass are dyed red, yellow, or blue.[2] But in her climate as in her history Babylonia was the land of sudden change. In spite of the monotony of the plain, the aspects of nature in that region are well fitted to impress the human imagination. In spring the melting of the snows on the Armenian mountains causes the Euphrates and the Tigris to descend in flood and to spread over the country like a sea. It is no wonder that in such a land the legend of the Flood was conceived. Until the Chaldæans had become engineers and had constructed canals and dykes, they lived in yearly dread of the ruinous overflow of the rivers. Hence in the inscriptions of the Babylonian kings and in the Code of Law frequent reference to the duty of repairing the dykes
2250 B.C. is made. Hammurabi, King of Babylon, and probably a contemporary of Abraham, prided himself on his great engineering works. A canal bore his name. "I guided," he says, "the waters of its tributaries over the desert plains and into the sandy tracts. I thus gave perpetual streams to the Accadians and the Sumerians. . . . I changed desert lands into fruitful gardens."[3] Indeed, it has been suggested that it was the control of the canal system which brought political authority in Babylonia.

[1] Bk. I. ch. 193.
[2] Layard, "Nineveh and its Remains," p. 56; ed. 1891.
[3] Oppert, Hist., p. 36.

Whenever the central power collapsed, the whole scheme of irrigation became disorganised. Like the Egyptians, the Babylonians were compelled to undertake vast works for the proper distribution of water throughout an immense district. Thus multitudes of slaves were continually employed in building and repairing the dykes, constructing breakwaters, and making lakes for the overflow of the rivers. One lake was twenty miles long, and was surrounded by a wall. The land on the east of the Euphrates was marshy, and the marshes were lower than the river-bed. To prevent a loss of water at this single point locks and dykes were built in three months by ten thousand men. The more we read history the more we see how great a part economic conditions have played in the happiness and the misery of mankind.

9. The climatic conditions of Mesopotamia are such as to aggravate the hardships of labour. The desert, region of wind and sand, was visible from the towers of Babylon, and made its influence felt within the gates. When the whirlwind advances, carrying with it clouds of dust, utter darkness prevails. So devastating is the hot wind that when it blows the verdure of the plain is burned up in a few hours. The desert storms are seen advancing from a great distance, and as they pass they leave havoc in their train. This sudden and anarchic element in nature deeply impressed the Chaldæan mind, whose conception of divinity was a being engaged for ever in destroying and creating anew his own work. This central belief served likewise as an image not merely for the operations of God and of nature, but of man. Nature was like a vast web, unwoven in the autumn, woven in the spring, and often torn like a veil. And what is the history of Babylon and of man but a perpetual weaving and unweaving? The Chaldæan mind looked towards the desert stretching westwards like an

arid sea, and saw in it not merely the dwelling-place of the storm, but of the storm demons or Lilla. The Semitic word for darkness (*ĕrĕb*) meant also the west. It is from that word that our own "Europe" is derived, and it reminds us that there was a time when the west, or place of sunset, was the great Unexplored, and that the desert was one of the gates which led to it. But although she sat near the desert and not far from the sea, and drew from both the sterner elements of her theology, it was from the sky that Babylon received her strength and her faith. The heavens, which filled the Vedic singers rather with joy than with awe, invited the special scrutiny of the Chaldæan mind, which was profoundly analytic. The stars played a solemn part in Babylon's history. It was the genuine conviction of her religious leaders throughout many variations of the national religion that the stars did actually keep watch above her and fought for her in their courses. In no part of the world do they shine with such brightness. On the broad plain of Chaldæa the entire heavenly hemisphere was visible, and was like an open book of omens. Whereas the Hebrews were forbidden to look too much at the stars (Deut. iv. 19), the Babylonians were so afraid of neglecting that worship that, just as the Greeks raised an altar to the Unknown God, *they* raised altars to unknown stars. The entire city was an observatory. We trace, indeed, in the religion of Babylon a deeper imaginative element than in the Vedas. Every star was a revelation. Every city, every individual, had a guardian star. An ancient name of Larsa was "City of the Sun," and Sippara was dedicated to the star of the morning. This naïve belief in stellar influence—in other words, the predominance of astrology over astronomy—is easily explained. Astrology was anthropocentric astronomy. And its childish faith contains at least this core of truth, that

since every part of the universe is in organic relation with every other part, the happenings in the stars, the laws of their motion, their growth and their decay, do affect the ultimate destinies of the earth. But if the summer nights at Babylon were so clear that all the stars were visible, her day was hot and lurid. According to Layard, Mesopotamia is parched by a heat almost rivalling the torrid zone. The temperature is often 124° Fahr. in the shade.[1] No doubt the Semitic race at length adapted itself to such a climate, but the thousands of captives deported from mountainous regions such as Elam and Armenia must have found that the miseries of compulsory labour were aggravated by the suffocating heat of the river levels. That even the Babylonians suffered from the heat is proved by an inscription of Nebuchadnezzar I. (1137 B.C.–1131 B.C.), in which it is stated that during a military expedition in the month of July "there was a fiery heat, the roads were glowing as with flames, there was no water, the wells were empty, the horses died on the roads, and men's hearts failed them." In the Code of Hammurabi there are special regulations for the price of beer "at harvest, in the time of thirst." It is said that in Southern Mesopotamia camels cannot live, and that birds are seen sitting in the date-trees about Baghdad with their beaks open and panting for want of air.

10. There is abundant evidence that the earliest Sumerian settlers found the process of acclimatisation difficult and dangerous. A whole literature devoted to disease was discovered in the ruins of the palace of Sardanapalus (Assurbanipal) at Nineveh. It formed part of the library of that king, and contains copies and translations of an ancient Sumerian work on magical medicine which consisted of three parts. Its formulæ are of pro-

[1] Hilprecht gives 41° Réaumur (*Die Ausgrabungen im Bêl Tempel zu Nippur*, p. 8).

found interest, not merely because they indicate the struggles of the human mind in its earliest encounters with disease, but because they throw light on the conditions of human life in a dateless age of the world. That a king of Nineveh caused a translation of this ancient book to be made for his own library is a proof of the continuity of culture and tradition which bound Babylonia together. Both Babylon and Nineveh looked towards early Chaldæa as the home of their religion and their science. But since Babylon became the centre of the entire political and social movement in Western Asia, her name shall be used in this chapter to denote a civilisation which spread far beyond her own gates. The work in question, therefore, was known in Babylon long before the rise of Nineveh, but we owe its preservation to the genius of Sardanapalus. It contains a long list of maladies, but makes frequent and particular mention of a disease called "the malady of the head," which seems to have been peculiar to the climate of Babylonia. The writer—doubtless a Magian—exhausts his vocabulary in the attempt to describe its symptoms. One immense formula is devoted to the discovery of a remedy. We are to imagine ourselves in the sultry plain of Chaldæa, at least five thousand years before Christ, and during the visitation of a pestilence. The incantations pronounced against the disease are not without a certain solemn rhythm and tolling as of a bell, and are full of the monotony of suffering:—

"The fever of agony, the violent fever, the fever which never abandons man, which never abates, which refuses to go away, the malignant fever—

"Call upon the spirit of the sky
And the spirit of the earth."[1]

[1] *La Magie chez les Chaldéens*, p. 5.

Herodotus was certainly wrong in his statement that the Babylonians had no physicians,[1] since in the Code of Hammurabi there is not merely a fixed scale of surgeons' fees but mention of operations for cataract with the "lancet."[2] Yet there can be no doubt that during a long period the only refuge for diseased persons was a sterile magic.[3] And it was probably no mere antiquarian interest which caused an Assyrian king to add to his library a work on therapeutics, which had already played a great part in the history of the race, and was, moreover, founded upon religion. Aid was still looked for in a series of formulæ which were believed to contain a potent diagnosis. There is one passage dealing with the "malady of the head" which is particularly striking. This disease appears to have been connected with some form of suppuration, and perhaps ended in madness. In a remarkable phrase it is described as being fastened like a dreadful tiara on the human head! The redundant formula is as follows:—

"The malady of the head rages on man, the malady of the head is fixed like a tiara, the malady of the head that rages from morning till night, the malady of the head shall be cured, in the sea and over the vast earth the tiara of agony shall be thrust off, the malady of the head pierces like the horns of a bull, the malady of the head throbs like a heart . . . the maladies of the head, may they fly away like birds into the vast space, may the tortured one be taken back into the protecting arms of his God!"[4]

[1] Bk. I. 197. [2] Hammurabi, 215–220.

[3] A series of formulæ relating to the movements of serpents, scorpions, dogs, and other animals have been recently translated by Boissier, *Choix de Textes*, 1905. Thus (i. 14): "Si un serpent est furieux contre un homme, et siffle et que sa langue sort, cet homme deviendra vieux et sera tué."

[4] *La Magie*, p. 19. In another passage this disease appears to be specially connected with life in the desert. "La maladie de la tête circule dans le désert" (*Lettres Assyriologiques*, vol. iii. p. 137). The "malady of the head" is mentioned in "Ishtar's Descent into Hell." *Cf. Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek* (Berlin, 1900), p. 87.

11. It is by studying such documents as these, rather than the arid lists of dates and dynasties, that we gain some insight into the conditions of life in those vanished ages. Nineveh and Babylon are long in ashes, but if we go deep enough we find that the ashes are still warm. In spite of the terror of their names, we gain, as we approach their ruins, that sense of human contact which all history awakens. Among the fallen walls of those Assyrian palaces, which would never have been built had there been no Babylon or early Chaldæa, we discover a kind of sculptured dirge and hear the echo of human cries. It is easy to deride such fantastic notions, but he will never read history to any profit or purpose who does not recognise in these rude attempts to understand Nature the genuine labour of the primitive mind. The attack of the plague was believed to be the grip of an actual but invisible being fastening upon man. In other words, disease was supernatural. Thus the plague is described as "that which has neither hands nor feet, but fastens upon man and binds him like a cord." Elsewhere it is said to "embrace him like a flame." In the night of human learning Nature appeared to be crowded with omens and alive with sorcery. Her outward demonstrations were looked upon in a kind of expectant awe. There is a cry to the sea to be calm, to the desert to be kind, and to the volcanic mountains to be still. There is even visible a steady advance in the humane, as the following supplication bears witness:—

"He who dies of hunger in prison, he who dies of thirst in prison, he who, thrown into a ravine and begging mercy for his life, eats the dust, . . . he who is so hungry that he is too weak to stand—

"Call upon the spirit of the sky
And the spirit of the earth!"[1]

[1] *La Magie*, p. 7.

This is a fitting opening for the long litany of man. The entire work, graven in clay, naïve and fantastic, stands like a helpless interjection before the accumulating troubles of existence.

12. Religion was the sole refuge. Strange as it may sound, it is nevertheless true that the more we know the Chaldæan mind the more we see that it was deeply religious. The old fundamental god was Ea, the Spirit of the Deep, who brooded over the waters of the Persian Gulf, where the Tigris and the Euphrates met. It was natural that where deep calls to deep the Chaldæan imagination felt the presence of those dynamic powers of the universe which in their ultimate meaning are still inscrutable. Eridu, the old seaport where "the cry of the Chaldæans was in the ships,"[1] was the seat of worship of the ocean god Ea. It was beyond the haze of the horizon in the Indian Ocean that the Chaldæans believed the islands of the Blest to be. The word ocean is originally Babylonian, *Uginna*, and means the vast circle. Now Ea, the Spirit of the Deep, was believed to have a son, Mirri-Dugga or Murru-Dugga, who was the intercessor or redeemer between God and man. Thus, when the "malady of the head" was at its height the sufferer was advised to have recourse to Mirri-Dugga, who pleads with Ea. "The man has tried all remedies," says Mirri-Dugga, "but knows none." Ea replies, "Go, take a pitcher of water at the place where the rivers meet, and bless it, and sprinkle it upon the man, and bind his head."[2] This passage is another proof of the struggles of the earliest Babylonian settlers with the climate of the marsh-lands which had not yet been drained. But it was not in natural but in supernatural causes that they sought to find the

[1] Isa. xliii. 14.

[2] *La Magie*, p. 21. *Cf.* Hommel, *Geschichte*, p. 255.

origin of affliction. There is the closest resemblance between the Chaldæan and the Hebrew method of judging human calamity. In the penitential psalms, from which we have already quoted, the belief is fully expressed that misfortune is the punishment of sin. Those psalms were likewise copied by order of Assurbanipal, and when we read them we seem to be not in Assyria but in Israel.[1] They were composed, however, neither in Nineveh nor in Babylon, but in certain dim old cities on the Euphrates, which were the earliest seats of Chaldæan civilisation.

13. The forces which created Babylon were exceedingly complex, but we are able to distinguish two great dynamic contributors to the main volume of her power. Those were (1) the Sumerians, whose religious conceptions we have been considering, and (2) the Semites. The statement of Berosus, that the mass of human beings who congregated round the site of the still unbuilt city "lived without rule like the beasts of the field," may be accepted as a naïve picture of that racial chaos of which Babylonia was long the scene. The most ancient inscriptions are not Semitic. They are Sumerian—*i.e.* they are the rough records graven in clay of a people who were probably of the same race as the Turks. After a close study of the Sumerian fragments, and a comparison between them and the Turkish dialects, Hommel came to the conclusion that the Sumerians were an offshoot of a Central Asiatic race.[2] In any case, neither the Sumerians nor the

[1] "I eat the bread and drink the water of wrath. Witless, I nourish myself in transgressions" (*Lettres Assyriologiques*, tome iii. p. 153).

[2] Hommel gives a number of words which indicate a common origin for the Turkish and Sumerian languages. Such words are God, son, father, mother, throat, &c. (*Geschichte*, p. 246). Whether he is correct in the belief that "Sumerian is the oldest civilised language in the world" is a matter for the judgment of philological experts.

Semites were of Babylonian origin, but the Sumerians appear to have arrived earlier. They settled in the south, near the marsh-lands, which their rude labour at length converted into a region fit for human occupation. They contributed all that was most profound and original in Babylonian civilisation, and even the Assyrians inherited their achievements. It was early, however, that representatives of a race endowed with greater political genius than the Sumerians appeared in Northern Mesopotamia and concentrated in Akkad. These were Semites, who had likewise come from the north, and they were destined to be the great cohesive force in Babylonia. Akkad, or Agadi, was originally the name of a city, but so great was the city's power that the name became co-extensive with Upper Babylonia, and served during centuries as the official designation of the entire district. Accadians and Sumerians were thus the first two great rival races between whom we are able to record with authentic detail a prolonged duel for the possession of the valley of the Euphrates. Their history begins with a series of inscriptions which are frequently contemporary with the events which they relate. These inscriptions prove the existence, at a very early date, of a number of cities ruled over by independent kings. Just as the Italy of Machiavelli's age was split into separate towns perpetually at war, so early Babylonia was the scene of numerous local sovereignties always in danger of collision. For the foundation of such cities as Eridu, the southern seaport, and Nippur, the great city in the north, we are carried back to a date not later than 6500 B.C. That the antiquity of Chaldæan sites is immense is proved by the fact that Ur, one of the oldest towns, was a colony of Nippur, which, therefore, must have existed far earlier. For our present purpose, however, we have no need to discuss the problem of dates which

long ago were blurred or effaced.[1] A survey of the country's ruins yields a far more impressive picture of the lapse of time. Thus at Nippur, Hilprecht has been able to measure roughly the depth of years by the depth of débris gathered about the site of the Temple of Bel, which, long before the date of Babylon, had been a great religious centre. The oldest or prehistoric ages until 4000 B.C. are represented by six different strata of ruin. The long period of Babylonian greatness (4000 B.C.–300 B.C.) is measured by nine different strata, while six represent the last phase, which was prolonged from 300 B.C. until 1000 years after Christ. This quantity of dust represents an immense portion out of the life of humanity. The mere inscriptions and tablets discovered by the American expedition at Nippur cover a space of 3350 years.[2] But the most ancient Sumerian cities were founded in an age in which writing had not been invented, and their débris represents an antiquity too remote to be dated. The investigator is like a traveller along a road on which, indeed, he finds milestones, but the distances recorded on the milestones have been obliterated by the weather, and at last even the milestones cease.

14. Nevertheless, although it is impossible to discover an exact chronology for the earliest periods, their ruins frequently furnish us with a vivid picture of the conditions of human life. For instance, at Telloh, Sarzec and Heuzey discovered not only a monument

[1] Whoever wishes to plunge into the tormenting study of Babylonian chronology may consult Menart's "The Real Chronology and the True History of the Babylonian Dynasties" (London, Albert Square, 1888); vol. ii. (No. 5) of the "Babylonian and Oriental Record;" and "Early Babylonian History," by Hugo Radau (New York, 1900). See also *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek* (Berlin, 1890), pp. 272-291.

[2] "The Babylonian Expedition of the University of Pennsylvania," vol. i. p. 11.

containing the oldest battle picture in the world, in which we see the vultures carrying off the heads of the decapitated slain,[1] but they stumbled upon the ruins of a royal villa, whose construction is of more than architectural interest. They were surprised to find that although the walls are still high there is no trace of any form of entrance to the building.[2] *There had never been a door.* In order to effect an entrance it was first necessary to scale the walls, and then descend through the roof. There could be no more vivid picture of the social chaos of the world six thousand years ago. There is one other fact worth mentioning. It was the custom of Chaldæan builders and overseers to sign their name or the name of the king on each brick as a guarantee that it was fit to be used and had been "passed." Such signatures were equivalent to a trade-mark or official stamp. But on the bricks of King Ur-Nina's villa the only signature is the mark of the overseer's finger-nail, which had been impressed while the clay was still soft. Since we find the mark of finger-nails in place of signatures even in contracts as late as the reign of Sennacherib,[3] we are prohibited from saying that in the time of King Ur-Nina (4000 B.C.) the art of writing was not widely diffused. As a matter of fact the Sumerian monuments of that age are covered by inscriptions.[4] But we do possess specimens of Chaldæan art in the shape of

[1] *Découvertes en Chaldée*, Part II. (Paris, 1887). Telloh is the Arabic name for a mound, and is specially applied to the mound situated on the left bank of the grand canal Schatt-el-Hai which connected the Tigris and the Euphrates.

[2] *Une Villa Royale Chaldéenne*, p. 8. There are reasons for believing that the building in question was sometimes used as a treasure-house or a granary.

[3] *Documents Juridiques de l'Assyrie et de la Chaldée*, par Oppert et Menant, p. 171.

[4] *E.g.* the bas-reliefs and inscriptions of Ur-Ghanna, King of Sirgulla, 4500 B.C.

cylinder seals which appear to belong to an age in which writing in the strict sense did not exist. These objects contain only fantastic ornaments, and the rudest pictures of plants and animals, as indications of an attempt of the human mind to become articulate.

15. A prolonged conflict took place between the rival cities of old Chaldæa, and in groping among the fragments of their history we appear to be in the presence of a struggle not unlike that which took place between the republics of Italy in the Middle Ages. It is evident that each city hoped to be the nucleus of a prospective state, and that each in turn attempted to seize the hegemony of the whole district. For instance, Larsa (the Ellasar of Genesis xiv. 1) became predominant in Southern Babylonia in the third millennium before Christ. This is proved by the fact that the old Sumerian name of Larsa before its capture by Hammurabi, viz. Singirra or Shinar, was the name by which the entire lower valley of the Euphrates was known to the Hebrews (Genesis x. 10).[1] Even, however, during what we may call the invertebrate period of Babylonian history, when there was no permanent central authority, there appears to be evidence that Babylon was already in existence, not indeed as a political but as a religious centre. In an inscription of [Uru]-Ka-gin-na, King of Sirgulla, there is mention of Tintira, the Seat of Life—that is, Babylon in its earliest name. The date assigned to this inscription is 4200 B.C. Now, in ancient Babylonia political authority was dependent upon religious functions and traditions, and was invariably their later development. It looks, therefore, as if it had been the policy

[1] According to Hommel (*Geschichte*, p. 220), the modern Senkereh is the Arabic equivalent of Shingir or Singirra, *i.e.* Shinar, just as Niffer represents Nippur. In other words, Singirra-Larsa, like Akkad, gave its name to an entire district.

of an ambitious power to erect a temple as a kind of outpost in a desirable district—an outpost, moreover, which, owing to its nature, would be inviolate. There the authority of the god might accumulate until such time as military occupation in his name became convenient. This method of sanctified aggression is not without examples in modern Christian States, whose religious missionaries have frequently been the forerunners of military conquest. What appears to strengthen this view, so far as the ancient world is concerned, is that the foundation of cities like Assur and Nineveh happened in the same way. Although the histories of Assyria and of Babylon, in so far as their rivalry is considered, begin to synchronise only in the second millennium, Nineveh, as a religious outpost, had been created as early as 3000 B.C. The original Sumerian name of Nineveh was Ghanna-Ki, *i.e.* City of Ghanna, the ancient goddess of the Sumerians.[1] Indeed, most of the difficulty, and part of the fascination, of Babylonian history lies in the intricate ramifications and the sporadic development over a wide area of a single civilisation. Simultaneous enterprises appear to have been undertaken at a very early time, and produced much later the most stupendous results. We behold an empire like Assyria rising out of a single early shrine. We discover flourishing kingdoms, but we trace with difficulty the date of the planting of their roots and the stages of their growth.

16. Not Nineveh, however, but Babylon was to be the first great goal of all the minor municipal experiments of Western Asia. The primitive seats of local power such as Nippur, Ur, Larsa, and Nisin, great and important as they were in their day, were, after all, only

[1] On the relation between Ghanna and Ninâ, whence Nineveh, see Hommel, *Geschichte*, p. 280.

microcosms which prepared the way for the macrocosm which was Babylon. Interesting as the history of their rivalries and of the extent of their conquests would be if it were thoroughly known to us, it could contain nothing so audacious or colossal as the history of the city which made them all her vassals. Compared with *her* archives theirs would be only suburban. They never accumulated such a massive authority, and the world was not filled with the names of any of them. Rather, it was by the grace of Babylon that they continued to exist at all, and to become her parishes. Most of them were her parasites, and were content to live upon what she allotted to them. She subdued all their chaotic elements into a harmony. The centre of gravity of that portion of Western Asia had been kept oscillating between each of them during centuries, but at last it became steady at Babylon.

17. Political and social centralisation has invariably been the result of a general collision of contradictory elements. When a crowd of forces are struggling within a given area, concentration takes place sooner or later round a point at which the advantages are greatest, and that point becomes the dominating centre. It was so in Greece and in Rome, in modern Germany, in modern Italy, and indeed in the evolution of all empires. But all such fusions are only late instances of a law of political construction which had already worked out great results at Babylon. What Latium did for Italy, Babylon did for Asia. The strong man, Sargon of Akkad, a city which had become a district, at last appeared, and having seized upon the more advantageous site of Babylon, which had hitherto been occupied only by the temple of a god, he converted it into a great political and military centre. His date is about 3800 B.C. The unmistakable proof of his power consists in the fact

that after his advent the kings of the neighbouring cities became only vice-kings and vassals. But the most surprising feature of his reign is the sudden and almost indefinite extension of the Babylonian Empire westwards. Inscriptions prove that Sargon undertook "a three years' campaign" in the West, and even the Mediterranean is mentioned. The actual city of Babylon had not yet become omnipotent, but it was already the nucleus of an empire. And it was then for the first time that the dwellers on the shores of the Mediterranean heard the name of a great Power which had arisen in the Orient. Until the third century before Christ that name was to be the greatest in the world. The subsequent history of Babylon makes it clear that Sargon's ambitious Western policy had become a tradition. Even a late reigning king of Assyria called himself Sargon II. in the hope of imitating the conquests of his namesake. The West, indeed, possessed the greatest fascination for the Babylonians, who were not content until Egypt, Phœnicia, and Cyprus had acknowledged their power. There have been in the history of the world regular periods of what we might call geographical excitement, when men felt compelled by something more than the mere lust of conquest to explore the unexplored. It is one of the ideal facts in the life of man that he is aware of the horizon, and that it is always beckoning to him. Even in the inscriptions of a ferocious conqueror like Tiglath-pileser I. (*circa* 1120 B.C.) there are traces of the excitement of travel. He calls himself with pride the "Conqueror of the Mediterranean," and he exhibits among his trophies the strange beasts, birds, and plants which he had discovered on the shores of that "great sea." It is characteristic of the history of Babylonia that everything is in motion. From the time of Sargon downwards military ex-

peditions are incessant in all directions. There is no stagnation or immobility as in Egypt. Even when alien dynasties seized the throne they became more Babylonian than the Babylonians. And when at length the Assyrians inherited the energy of the mother-state, they could only imitate but not surpass her colossal undertakings.

18. We cannot afford, however, to watch the prolonged and somewhat monotonous ebb and flow of power which changed so often the face of the Chaldæan Plain. We are more interested in Babylon herself than in her military fortunes, because we are attempting to discover her relation to humanity. It is certainly no matter of surprise that so much genius has been expended in excavating her ruins and those of her vassal cities. As men are able to judge the stature of an organism by the size of a single bone, so when we examine her fragments we are able to see how great an area her buildings covered and to guess from what height they fell. Her place in the annals of mankind is so great and so inscrutable that it is no wonder that men peer about her débris and vex her ghost in the hope of discovering some traces of her grandeur. But the Babylon whose ashes lie to-day on both sides of the Euphrates, which once flowed past her well-built quays,[1] was the city of Nebuchadnezzar, son of Nabopolassar (604 B.C.–562 B.C.), that is to say, the city at the height of her splendour but not at the height of her political greatness. Ages had passed since Sargon I. had made her a world power, and some of that power had departed. Nevertheless, Nebuchadnezzar did much by his conquests or reconquests to restore her prestige. Her trade was still enormous, and her wealth appeared to be inexhaustible. Nebuchadnezzar, whom

[1] "Euphrates interfluit, magnæque molis crepidinibus coercetur" (Quintus Curtius, *Hist. Alex. Magn.*, v. 1).

Maspero has happily called *le roi maçon*,[1] because of that king's passion for architecture and building of all sorts, created for the first time her outward glory. After all, it was *his* Babylon which was the wonder of the world, and excited the admiration of writers like Herodotus. If the present ruins are neither so extensive nor so full of treasure as might have been expected from the account Herodotus gives of so luxurious a city, the causes are not difficult to discover. To begin with, the explanation which Botta proposes of the peculiar form of the mounds which cover Nineveh is doubtless applicable in large measure to the mounds at Babylon. In both cases it is not a mere question of buildings placed in a sandy soil and gradually sinking under an accumulation of sand. Although so near the desert, the soil of Babylonia is not sandy. But the nature of the buildings furnishes an explanation of the form of their ruins. The walls were of an immense thickness, and after a long process of crumbling the detritus of the brick differs so little from ordinary soil that the growth of vegetation upon it is only a matter of time. In the second place, one of the chief causes of obliteration at Babylon was the overflow of the neglected canals, which not merely joined the two rivers at a hundred points, but irrigated the country in all directions. It can be easily imagined how, after the dykes had given way, the water began to percolate and gradually sap the foundations of buildings of soft brick. Stone was indeed used in Babylonia, but only rarely, since it had to be imported at great expense, and the only native material for building was brick, sun-dried or baked. Given these materials, it is indeed a surprise that there should exist extensive ruins, or any ruins at all, after such a lapse of ages. But, lastly, before any natural causes had begun to operate,

[1] Page 641.

Babylon had been frequently pillaged and her great public buildings had been destroyed. She became the plunder of successive conquerors. Four great capitals are said to have been built out of her ruins, and two of these were Seleucia and Ctesiphon. Moreover, during a long period she remained the quarry for surrounding villages and towns. Yet even as they lie to-day the ruins cover an immense area. Layard saw "for a distance of three miles an uninterrupted line of mounds, the ruins of vast edifices, collected together as in the heart of a great city."[1] Although the débris is contained within a space three miles long and a mile and a quarter broad, no one supposes that that area defines the boundaries of the city. On the contrary, there exist on every side, and especially towards the north and east, remains of great buildings. Irregular masses extend for miles, and modern travellers are more and more convinced that the ancient reports as to the city's magnitude should not be summarily rejected.

19. According to Herodotus, who appears to have actually visited Babylon, the city was built in the form of a square whose sides were 120 stades, or about 14 miles, each way. In other words, the entire length of the walls was 56 miles,[2] and the inner area contained about two hundred. This calculation is believed to be excessive. But there is a statement of Xenophon which brings before us the magnitude of the city in a more vivid manner than any surveyor's estimate could ever attain. He says that it was not until sunrise that the garrison and the inhabitants of the city were aware of its fall. Now, fighting had continued throughout the night, and Xenophon's words imply that many hours had passed before the news had spread through the

[1] "Nineveh and Babylon," p. 491.
[2] Herodotus, i. 178.

streets and to the most distant parts of the city.[1] Such a fact proves the truth of the statement that Babylon was not merely a city but an enclosed district. It contained not merely streets, squares, and docks, but great open spaces in which wheat was grown with a view to victualling the place during a siege. It was a vast garden city. Between the streets lay meadows, orchards, and pleasure-grounds which were the wonder of the world. The hanging gardens were raised so high that, according to Quintus Curtius, they looked from a distance like a forest on the top of a mountain.[2] The entire mass was supported by twenty walls, 22 feet thick and 11 feet apart. The gardens were built in terraces one above the other, and had the aspect of an amphitheatre. Each terrace was supported by a vaulted gallery.[3] On the highest terrace, according to Strabo, there were "water engines," or pumps, by means of which water was raised from the Euphrates; "for the river, which is a stadium in breadth, flows through the middle of the city, and the garden is on one of its banks."[4] If, however, so much space was allotted to the gardens and public buildings of Babylon, the residential portion must have covered an immense area. For instance, the enclosure in which the Temple of Bel stood was quarter of a mile in length and in breadth. The platform at the temple's base measured 200 yards each way. Strabo says that the building itself was a quadrangular pyramid of baked brick reaching to a height of 606 feet 9 inches.[5]

[1] Cyrus attacked Babylon at midnight. The month was October. The passage from Xenophon is in the "History of Cyrus," Bk. VII. ch. v.

[2] "Ut procul visentibus sylvæ montibus suis imminere videantur" (*op. cit.*, v. 1).

[3] Diod. Sic., Bk. V. 10.

[4] Bk. XVI. ch. i. 5.

[5] XVI. i. 5. Strabo's "one stade" is believed, however, to represent the length of the circular ascent. In that case the actual height would not be more than 500 feet.

This extraordinary structure must have dominated the Babylonian Plain much as the Cathedral of Chartres dominates La Beauce. After its destruction by the Persians Alexander the Great attempted to rebuild it, and employed during two months 10,000 men for the sole purpose of clearing away the débris. Even in the ruins of Babylon we discover traces of her megalomania. Everything she did was on an immense scale. The thickness of her walls excited the astonishment of early writers, who say that there was on the top of them a roadway so wide that four-horsed chariots could be driven past each other with no difficulty or danger. When Alexander saw them, their height, although it had been reduced by Cyrus, Darius, and Xerxes, was in some places not less than 75 feet. Facts like these help us to understand why Alexander, as Strabo says, preferred Babylon because it far surpassed other cities in magnitude. In the age of her splendour she looked like a vast glimmering caravansary of the human race. Each of her walls was pierced by twenty-five brazen gates, so that in all there were a hundred, which opened into streets which led direct to the quays. It was in accordance with the Babylonian love of science that the city was built with mathematical exactness. If we look at Oppert's map we shall see that the Euphrates formed the diagonal of the vast square. A bridge 1000 yards long and 30 feet broad spanned the river, and there was a tunnel underneath; and we now know from the recently discovered code of law that there was a constant traffic in boats.

20. The concentration of a vast multitude within the limits of a single city has invariably presented the same moral problem. There takes place a certain feverish heightening of human temperature. There is the excitement of contact. The streets are full of faces

perpetually scrutinising each other in the hope of discovering signs of sympathy. Commerce brings wealth, which in its turn brings luxury and vice and ruin. Babylon became the byword of the world. There is a most remarkable statement by Quintus Curtius regarding her manners; and if, as there is no reason to doubt, that statement is true, it lets us see how insidious was her power. In his Life of Alexander the Great he tells us that the world's conqueror was so strangely fascinated by Babylon, even in her *déshabille*, that he could not tear himself away.[1] But he remained too long. No place, says Quintus Curtius, was ever so ruinous to military discipline, no city ever so learned in all the modes of vice. In thirty-four days the victorious army of Asia was so corrupted that had it been called upon to face an enemy it would have been routed.[2] So great was the peril that reinforcements were hurried up at the last moment. This statement of a sober writer appears to justify the splendid invective which the great visionary idealists of Israel uttered against Babylon. She hypnotised even her invaders. She threw upon them the anæsthetics and stupor of her luxury. Men seem to have felt a peculiar excitement whenever they came within sound of the traffic of her streets. In her heart she was cosmopolitan, and loved to see foreigners, and especially merchants, within her walls. She even invented strange luxuries and ruses to allure them.[3] She made them thoroughly at home, and supplied them with postal arrangements which are said to have been perfect. Her

[1] "Diutius in hac urbe quam usquam constitit rex" (v. 1). Alexander died at Babylon, and there is evidence that his own excesses either caused or hurried his death.

[2] "Inter hæc flagitia exercitus ille domitor Asiæ, per xxxiv dies saginatus, ad ea, quæ sequebantur, discrimina haud dubie debilior futurus fuit si hostem habuisset" (V. i. 39).

[3] Herodotus, i. 199.

couriers and caravans went throughout the civilised world. She was the Bank and Exchange of the East. She sent her stuffs to Egypt and Phœnicia, and the Phœnicians, who were the great carriers and middlemen of the ancient world, distributed them through Asia Minor and along the shores of the Mediterranean. Her rugs, linen, pottery, and glass took the highest prices in the world's markets. A great trade-route led from her gates to the Caspian Sea and thence to India.[1] It was from India that she was supplied with some of the dyes for her fabrics, with shawls (a Sanskrit word), hunting dogs, and precious stones for seals, lapis-lazuli, emeralds, and jaspers. She was placed near Arabia and Syria, where the finest cotton grew. Her sea-borne commerce met her caravans at the mouth of the Euphrates. She was the market of Asia. Like modern England she depended upon the foreigner for her raw material, and she passed cotton, wool, and silk into her looms. Her carpets and her robes, her perfumes, and chiselled walking-sticks were all the fashion. Athenæus mentions her perfumed wine. Her banquets were the talk of the world, which aped her manners. Herodotus presents us with a vivid picture of a well-dressed Babylonian gentleman, sumptuous in tunics and leather shoes, and carrying "a walking-stick carved at the top into the form of an apple, a rose, a lily, an eagle, or some such ornament." The city spent vast sums on religious processions, and it was part of her policy to impress strangers by her grandeur. But even in the midst of her vain show we discover traces of that humanity which lay obscure within her. Thus the sick were laid in the streets in order that the passers-by, if they chanced to have once suffered

[1] For a description of this road, and of the pass through which it led, *cf.* Pliny, "Natural History," vi 17. One portion of it was cut through the mountains; "toto opere manu facto," says Pliny.

from the same disease, might be able to give advice, "recommending whatever they found good in their own case or in a case known to them."[1] There was the naïve provision that no one was allowed to go past without having at least inquired from what ailment the patient suffered. She was the city of ideas. She was the *ville lumière*. She endured sack after sack, but even in her state of ruin she astonished Alexander. And she might have continued to shake herself free from her enemies had not a weak prince, spending in debauch a night which should have been spent in victory, brought the invader within the gates. She lay within sight of the desert, and mocked it by her abundance. Even her revilers appear to have been fascinated, talk of her beauty,[2] call her "the golden city," and allow us to see almost every plume and ribbon of her pomp. Over what she once was there now grow a few tamarisks.

21. But Babylon has left not only material ruins. She has left what we may call spiritual ruins in the form of religion and of law. We have already looked at the dark background of her idolatry and her faith, but her contributions to the religions of the world cannot be investigated here. It is in her system of justice, and in her dealings with her own people and with her enemies, whom she compelled to serve her, that we are at present interested. The entire superstructure of her vast social system rested upon a foundation of involuntary labour. And we have now to ask how she treated the mass of human beings whose toil made her great. What share of her wealth and of her well-being fell to the slaves, without whom her industrial organisation and her place in the world could never have been maintained?

[1] Herodotus, i. 197. This custom was introduced at Rome.
[2] "Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency" (Isa. xiii. 19).

22. The slaves were the working classes in Babylonia, and we possess three sources of information regarding their treatment. These sources are: (1) certain mural decorations in which the Assyrian kings celebrated typical scenes of the capture and enslavement of prisoners of war; (2) a large number of clay tablets containing contracts for the sale and the purchase of slaves; and (3) the great system of law known as the Code of Hammurabi. There can be no doubt that the Assyrian sculptures depict what took place on all the battlefields of Western Asia. Both Nineveh and Babylon undertook wars for the express purpose of procuring slaves. It is true that the Assyrians are usually supposed to have been more ruthless in their conquests than the Babylonians. But it is doubtful whether this supposition is correct. Assyria inherited all the traditions of the mother-state. The fact that the religion and the law of Babylon prevailed at Nineveh is proof that the civilisation of the two states was the same. Their methods of capture and of enslavement cannot have been different. It is even probable that in the great days of her aggression Babylon was more savage than her daughter in exacting the conditions of peace. There is a passage in Habakkuk which indicates the terror that her army inspired. "They are terrible and dreadful," says the Hebrew prophet. "Their horses also are swifter than the leopards and are more fierce than the evening wolves, and their horsemen shall spread themselves, and their horsemen shall come from far. They shall come all for violence . . . *and they shall gather slaves as the sand.*" Now, the spirit of this description is exactly reproduced in those Assyrian sculptures in which we see long lines of slaves being dragged by chains fastened sometimes to their lips, or being forced under the lash of the overseer to move immense blocks for the construction of temples

and palaces.[1] Men like Tiglath-pileser, Sennacherib, and Assurbanipal carried on a traditional policy of decimation and enslavement; and when at last the mother-state was attacked it was with weapons which she had invented. The Assyrian kings were hardly more ferocious than Nebuchadnezzar, who deported an entire nation, held them enslaved, slew their princes, and put out the eyes of their king. The Assyrian sculptures and inscriptions may, therefore, be taken to represent the methods of warfare during a long era of Babylonian military activity. At first vengeance was wreaked upon entire communities. But it was discovered later that a far greater triumph consisted in the capture of living booty. Those who offered resistance were tortured before they were killed, while those who surrendered were bound hand and foot and dragged before the king, who placed his feet upon their necks.[2] In certain bas-reliefs warriors are seen decapitating prisoners and counting the dripping heads. Sometimes the vanquished are undergoing impalement, which consisted in driving a stake immediately under the ribs through the heart. In a piece of sculptured infamy from Khorsabad we discover a man flaying a prisoner with a semicircular knife. Sometimes the head was torn asunder by means of iron implements. In a bas-relief in the British Museum officers are seen pointing out to some Armenian ambassadors the tortures which are being inflicted upon prisoners from Elam. These and similar sculptures, which have all the appearance of having been taken from the life, and are full of the realism of history, make us see how great a volume of human suffering had gathered round the foundations of those vanished states.

23. Thus, in describing his operations against Nistoun,

[1] *Cf.* Nos. 53, 54 in the Nineveh Gallery of the British Museum.
[2] Assyrian Saloon, British Museum, No. 3.

667–635 B.C. Assurbanipal says with pride, "I dashed the children like unfledged birds against the rocks of the mountains."[1] We may compare this terrible inscription with the cry of revenge of the captive Jews against Babylon—"Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones" (Ps. cxxxvii.). This is a clear evidence of a *lex talionis* carried out on a vast scale, and inherited as a form of national vengeance. Conquest involved either extermination or slavery. In describing the sack of a city Assurbanipal says, "I took away their children like troops of lambs." It was at the fall of Sour that "I flayed alive the leaders, and covered the walls with their skins. I buried some alive, and others were crucified and impaled. I caused many to be flayed before my own eyes, and I covered the walls with their skins. I placed in mockery crowns like royal crowns on their leaders' heads."[2] Again, "I burned alive 1000 captives. I expressly spared not one. I piled up the bodies as high as the wall." At Tiela, "after a bloody combat, I seized the city and took 3000 warriors. I carried off the prisoners, the booty, oxen, sheep. I burned great quantities of spoil. With my own hands I captured many prisoners alive. I cut off the hands and the feet of some, the nose and ears of others, and tore their eyes out." In the campaign against Pitoura, "I crucified 700 men before
1116 B.C. the great gate of the city."[3] Tiglath-pileser I. appears to have been more bent on the capture of living enemies, because *he* states that in Kummukh he took 6000 men whom he gave as slaves to his own people.[4]

24. Those pictures of the wild and chaotic morning of human history are sufficient to discredit Comte's "philosophic view" of slavery. Comte says that, con-

[1] *Cf.* Oppert's translation of these and the following inscriptions in his *Histoire*, pp. 77 *et sqq.*

[2] Oppert, *op. cit.*, 79. [3] Ibid., p. 88. [4] Ibid., p. 45.

sidered as a "military institution," slavery was profoundly beneficial (*profondément salutaire*) both to master and to slave. And the reason he gives is that military activity, which was so indispensable for the protection of the industry of primitive society, could not have been otherwise developed. It was necessary that while the warrior went abroad the slave should work at home.[1] Unfortunately, as we have just seen, the warrior went abroad for the express purpose of adding to the number of slaves. The military activity of men like Tiglath-pileser and Nebuchadnezzar had only one result—the overcrowding of the slave-market. Indeed, slaves were multiplied to so great an extent that not merely was free labour, if it really existed, destroyed by a ruinous competition, but the condition of the slaves was rendered still more intolerable. The increase in their number meant a reduction in their value and a corresponding brutality of treatment. As we shall see, their price was often lower than the price of sheep, and far lower than the price of horses. Thus the actual reason which Comte brings forward to prove the advantages of slavery is a proof of its deepening sorrows. His picture of the average slave labouring peacefully under friendly patronage is historically false, and, like many of his magnificent generalisations, rests upon rickety data. There is one other fact which proves his theory to be not merely false but absurd, and it is that slaves both in Babylon and in Greece were compelled to go to war. In other words, they were compelled to fight in order to add to their own numbers, since every prisoner became a slave. The human market became more glutted than the cattle-market. So vast was the amount of human labour commanded by the kings of Babylon that the wastage of human life was never felt. It was not merely that

[1] *Système de Politique Positive* (Paris, 1853), tome iii. p. 185.

labour was hereditary, and that the son of a slave was thereby likewise a slave, but that a successful war or a *razzia* added immense numbers to the servile population. It is the great irony of the history of slavery that the slave's one chance of humane treatment lay in his economic value. Thus, when slaves were scarce it was as unprofitable to abuse *them* as it would have been to abuse the oxen at the plough. On the other hand, it was precisely in a period of great military activity, followed by the deportation and enslavement of entire communities, that the slave's life reached its lowest valuation.

25. Once the slaves were safe within the triple walls of Babylon, it is little wonder that they were subjected to the sternest discipline. Otherwise, the State would have been kept rocking on dangerous foundations. There are, indeed, indications that outbreaks took place, and that, as in Greece and in Rome, they even reached the proportions of civil war. But we hear of no Babylonian Spartacus, and it is probable that the servile masses gathered from the ends of the earth, speaking different languages and worshipping different gods, possessed no real cohesion. They do not seem to have attained the solidarity and self-consciousness of the Roman slaves or the Spartan helots. They were a vast living débris of humanity—Syrians, Jews, Egyptians, Elamites, as well as Babylonians—and if they possessed any common language it must have been only the gesture of suffering or resignation. It may be true that the Code of Hammurabi, in so far as it regulates the slave traffic, deals only with home slaves, *i.e.* with slaves of Babylonian origin. In that case we may infer that the treatment of aliens must have been even harsher and was a matter of indifference to the law. But some of the contracts which have been discovered and deciphered prove,

by the names which appear in them, that foreign slaves were continually being bought and sold. Those contracts were certainly legal, and hence many aliens gradually acquired a kind of naturalisation as slaves. As in every society, so in Babylon, there was a perpetual oscillation of levels. We find, for instance, that ruined freemen, debtors, and sometimes criminals, were compelled to become slaves, and that slaves were, on certain conditions, permitted to enjoy an ambiguous liberty. But we are able to distinguish that fixed triple division into which human society fell from the beginning, and seems naturally to fall, no matter by what name the State is known. In Babylon there were the three great classes—the Amêlu, or aristocrat; the Muskênu, or bourgeois; and the Ardu, the slave. This is practically the same division which we found in Hindustan, although the subdivisions of the upper classes at Babylon are not so clear. The Ardu was the slave of the Amêlu and the Muskênu. But we have no means of discovering the numerical proportion between the three classes. That the slaves vastly outnumbered the other two there cannot be the slightest doubt. According to some writers, the number of slaves in the earliest period was not great. This opinion, however, appears to be based merely upon the fact that no document relating to the division of hereditary property in that period has been found to contain the mention of more than four slaves in the possession of one owner. Thus slaves were to freemen as four to one. But so wide a generalisation seems hardly to be justified by so few documents. Other contracts containing evidence of a greater proportion of slaves might be discovered tomorrow. Besides, the slaves in question belonged to the household, and no average household required a large number of *them*. The servile ranks were filled not so much by domestic slaves as by those who were

employed in manufactures, in agricultural labour, and in public works. There existed in Babylon, as in Athens, slave proprietors who hired out the labour of their slaves as they hired out oxen. In the contracts which have been already translated the social position of the slave is made clear. In the oldest documents he is described by the word *sag*, *i.e.* chattel, thing, object; or it is equivalent to the word "head" when applied to cattle. He is not a person. Neither his free-will nor his responsibility is presupposed. Whereas in every contract which deals with freemen the name of the father is given, in the case of the slave no family name is mentioned. It is, therefore, difficult to understand the statement of Oppert that, "far from being a mere chattel as at Rome, the slave at Babylon is a person."[1] No doubt, as we shall see later, there were some strange contradictions in the Babylonian system; but that the master possessed over his slave, as over every other part of his property, the *jus utendi et abutendi* is proved by the last paragraph in the Babylonian Law Code—"If a slave has said to his master, 'You are not my master,' he shall be brought to account as his slave, and his master shall cut off his ear." The following is a typical and business-like contract for the sale and purchase of a slave. "Sini-Istar has bought the slave Ea-tappî from Ni-Ni-ellati and his son Ahia; the entire price is ten shekels (thirty shillings). Ni-Ni-ellati and Ahia his son can make no farther claim."[2] It is often said that the slaves were used like chattels, but it would be far truer to say that they were used like animals. As we have seen, they were counted, like cattle, by the head (*sag*), and like cattle they were branded. In the Code of Hammurabi (par. 226) the branding of slaves is disinctly mentioned. The name of the owner was often stamped upon the hand, and there is reason to

[1] *La Condition des Esclaves*, p. 4. [2] Meissner, *De Servitute*, p. 5.

believe that the brander of cattle was also the brander of slaves.[1] Or, like dogs, slaves were compelled to wear, probably round their necks, clay tablets with the name and address of their owner engraved upon them.

26. But if they were used like cattle they were often sold cheaper. It is, of course, evident from the contracts that the price varied, and no doubt the fluctuation was caused not merely by the special value of individuals but by the state of the slave-market. In the earliest times the average price appears to have been four and a half shekels, or thirteen shillings and sixpence, for a female slave, and thirty shillings for a male.[2] But if a fall in prices is to be explained by an overstocked market, the authority of Meissner's statement that in the earlier period slaves were few appears to be somewhat weakened. At any rate, the misery of the slave might be measured by the fact that at certain times he was to be had cheaper than a sheep. In other words, since a sheep was of more value than a slave it received greater care. Thus in the reign of Naboindos a sheep cost eighteen shillings,[3] whereas not much earlier, in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II., there is the case of a female slave who was sold for two shillings.[4] Often, indeed, the intellectual gifts or the personal attractions of the finer sort of foreign slaves realised prices as high as a manch (£9). But the price of the average labourer certainly never rose as high as the price of a riding horse, which in the reign of Merodach- 1127–
nadin-akhi was about £7, 10s. The horseman had thus 1125 B.C.
more reason to ride his slave rather than his horse to death. Even in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, when

[1] Johns' "Babylonian and Assyrian Laws," p. 177.

[2] "Pretium servi illo tempore multo vilius erat quam postea. Serva enim iam 4½ siclos emi poterat et servi pretium inter 10 siclos et tertiam minæ partem iactabatur" (Meissner, p. 3).

[3] Sayce, *op. cit.*, p. 109

[4] Ibid., p. 78.

Babylon was astonishing the world by her magnificence, a male slave was sold for £4, 10s. And a female slave, together with her child, was to be had for fifty-seven shillings. It has been supposed that according to the Code of Hammurabi the average price was twenty shekels, *i.e.* £3. The paragraph in which this price appears to be implied (No. 252) enacts that if a slave has been accidentally killed by an ox, the owner of the ox shall pay to the owner of the slave one-third of a mina of silver, *i.e.* £3. But the damages here awarded are in the nature of a fine. In the paragraph immediately preceding, it is presupposed that although the owner of the ox was aware of the animal's dangerous character he had taken no precautions to ensure the safety of the public. The damages, therefore, may represent a higher sum than the value of the slave. In any case, the rise in the price of slaves no doubt synchronised with a general rise in the price of all commodities, so that it is hardly by means of such arithmetical calculations that we shall be able to prove any genuine mitigation of suffering. The one fact remains that the vast superstructure of Babylonian civilisation rested upon a basis of involuntary and degraded toil. The State possessed the right of commanding, in certain cases, the work even of private slaves, who, at stated seasons, were compelled to join the ranks of those condemned to public forced labour. Its levy masters, who were really slave-drivers, were entitled to enter a house and demand the surrender of all such slaves. It is doubtless true that, compared with those enchained gangs of captives whom we see in the mural decorations, the domestic slaves at Babylon enjoyed a kind of liberty.

27. Some writers, however, point out too complacently that, after all, the slaves were provided with food and clothing, and that otherwise they would have

starved. We find little cause for retrospective satisfaction in the fact that at Babylon men starved not merely for want of work but for want of slavery. It was precisely by the ruinous competition with slave labour that the freeman was driven to become a slave, and the arguments which are brought forward to prove the "advantages" and "privileges" of slavery appear to be as misleading as the arguments of Comte. Those so-called "advantages" had only one result. They succeeded in making permanent a social system which was based on the destruction of human personality. Moreover, it was in Babylon that the struggle between capital and labour really began. For Babylon was organised upon a capitalist basis, and labour was not even paid wages. The fact that in many contracts a wage is mentioned when a slave has been hired is extremely misleading. It might be supposed that this wage was paid to the slave: it was paid to the master. As we shall see later, there are some baffling contradictions in the social position of slaves, but it is now admitted that "theoretically a master owned his slave's property." If any property happened to fall to a slave the master claimed it. We have the extraordinary anomaly of the master posing, and legally authorised to pose, as his slave's heir. Even when a slave had married a free woman who bequeathed property to him, his master claimed and received half. No doubt the position of the refined domestic slave who ministered to the vices of his master was often, in Babylon as in Rome, one of sinister power. It must be to that dangerous class or to the minority of more intellectual slaves that Oppert refers when he expresses astonishment at the "extreme liberty" which the servile population enjoyed. But that a single breath of liberty ever reached the lower strata of slavery it is impossible to believe. If the "advantages" of that condition had been as great as

Comte and his followers suppose, or rather if they had existed at all, it is unlikely that there would have been so many efforts to escape. Now, attempt at flight was so common that the purchasers of slaves were guaranteed against the risk in their contracts and by the law. Meissner states that we do not know the punishment inflicted upon fugitives. He thinks, however, that it cannot have been severe, because there is recorded the case of a slave who, although he had escaped twice and had been twice captured, is yet found again in the same family. But the Code of Hammurabi, discovered since Meissner's essay on Babylonian slavery was written, proves that the penalties for flight were excessive. He who induced a slave to escape, or harboured the fugitive, was sentenced to death.[1] Moreover, as we have seen, when a slave attempted to repudiate his master the legal punishment consisted in cutting off the ears.[2] Such deterrents indicate that attempts to escape were frequent. But if slavery possessed any advantages for the slave he should never have sought to escape at all. That he was often bold enough to run such an enormous risk in a triple-walled city like Babylon is the surest sign of his suffering. His identity was unmistakable, because he was branded, and when the hue and cry was raised the entire community was interested in his capture, and became his pursuers.

28. The truth is that enslavement was, short of death, the most dreaded form of retribution. Or, rather, death meant freedom. We are told that slavery awaited the disobedient son or the disobedient wife, and there is even an Assyrian case in which a brother enslaved his sister. Whereas in Hindustan the Sudra was allowed to

[1] Code, 15, 16. In 1893 Meissner appears to have changed his opinion. "Wenn Sclaven flohen und gefangen genommen wurden, erwarteten sie eine harte Strafe." Cf. *Beiträge zum alt babylonischen Privat recht*, p. 7 (Leipzig, 1893).

[2] Code, 282.

move from place to place, in Babylon the Ardu or slave was enchained within a given area. It was Babylon which first created a great sedentary population, and her example was followed by Egypt, Greece, and Rome. Besides, she laid the basis of feudalism, whose social effects we shall examine later. In Babylon, as in Europe during the Middle Ages, there existed *Glebæ Adscripti*, or labourers who were fixed to the soil and sold with it.

29. It is interesting and even important to contrast this treatment of the working class at Babylon with the humaner policy of Israel. Nothing, indeed, is more remarkable in ancient history than the mild slave laws of the Hebrews. That race had suffered too much bondage in Egypt and in Babylon not to be touched by similar misfortunes. They alone had a genuine conception of human liberty. Whereas in Babylon death awaited the man who gave refuge to a fugitive slave, in Israel that refuge was commanded. "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the slave which is escaped from his master unto thee. He shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates where it liketh him best. Thou shalt not oppress him" (Deut. xxiii. 15, 16). It is certainly most remarkable that this tremor of kindness ran through Canaan at the very moment when Babylon was heaping oppression upon her slaves. And yet during centuries of Christianity it was not the Hebraic but the Babylonian policy of enslavement which was to become a tradition and a model in Europe and throughout the world. In Israel legislation was actually undertaken on behalf of the slaves, in Babylon only on behalf of the masters. In Babylon the slave was an animal and a chattel; in Israel he was a person. Every seventh day the Hebrew slave enjoyed rest like his master, and after seven years of service he was free (Exod. xx. 10; xxi. 2).

30. At Babylon, if a female slave possessed young children her price was greatly reduced, since the master was thus compelled to provide extra food and clothing with no return in the form of labour. Children, therefore, were sold for a song, because their purchase was a speculation. They might either die in the hands of the buyer or grow up unfit for work. In later Babylonian law it is enacted that under certain circumstances children shall be sold for half a shekel of silver, *i.e.* one shilling and sixpence each. There is a case of a female slave who, together with her child three months old, was purchased for 120 shekels. She was an Egyptian, and was taken prisoner during the reign of Cambyses. Here is another typical contract of the same period, which has been translated by Mr. Pinches: "In the
522 B.C. seventh year of Cambyses the King, the month Kislev, fifth day, the Razamubba, son of Razam, has given back Asbumetana, son of Asbutalika, Kardara and Hattiya, their wives, for two and two-thirds of a mina of silver, to Iddinâ, the magician, son of Nabû-Âhi-iddin. He has given them up. Aratarušu, the chief of the field labourers, has declared thus, 'I bear witness that his money has been taken.'" Then follow the names of witnesses. Mr. Pinches points out that such contracts indicate that slaves were sometimes sold on condition that if the seller thought fit he might buy them back on refunding the money.[1] It is thus clear that the vast system of kidnapping which formed the inexhaustible source of slavery at Babylon was legalised at every point, and was controlled even in its details by the State.

31. Perhaps, however, the real condition of the servile population at Babylon is indicated most vividly by the word *binnu*, or *bennu*, which appears both in the

[1] "Documents relating to Slave-dealing in Babylonia in Ancient Times" (*Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, Nov. 1884).

contracts and in the Code. This word stands for a disease which specially afflicted slaves. Scheil translates it as "paralysis," and it is believed to have attacked especially the mouth and the hands. It was so deadly, and rendered the slave so useless, that the purchaser received certain guarantees in case of its outbreak within one month after the purchase. The Code ordains that "if a man has bought a male or female slave and the slave has not fulfilled his month, but the *bennu* disease has seized him, he shall return the slave and shall take back the money he paid" (278). The fact that it was a nervous disease is of profound significance. It indicates not only bodily but mental anguish, and bears witness to centuries of ill-treatment. Like all nervous diseases it must have been hereditary, and the unruffled phraseology of the Code hides the sufferings of generations. Another glance at those Assyrian sculptures which we have already considered will make it easy to understand how such a disease arose. For we see gangs of slaves harnessed to immense blocks which they are dragging over the ground while the overseers are urging them by blows. Superintending every group of three or four is a levy master, and invariably the rod is in his hand. In order to understand the real state of the slave's body and of his mind under such conditions of labour we would require to take his temperature, and no doubt we should find it at the point of fever. It is, indeed, the misfortune of the investigator that long before he begins to apply his thermometric measurements to the heat of human history the matter has cooled. Nevertheless, we are often able to rediscover by means of single words the symptoms of a vast social fever and disorder. Injustice, like every other moral malady, is contagious, and brings with it not only mental but physical suffering. According to Jensen, *binnu* was a desease which affected the

muscles. And certainly it is no matter of surprise that human muscles subjected to such disproportionate and interminable labour soon broke down. A vast paralysis, moral as well as physical, had seized upon the labouring population at Babylon, and the slave whip had produced a hereditary nervous terror. And yet these trembling, wageless slaves were the source of wealth.

32. The attempt of some Assyrian scholars to discover modern ideas of right and of equity in the jurisprudence of Babylon is interesting and often valuable, but it is not less often thoroughly misleading. It has the effect of antedating the era of justice. Busy rather with the language and the grammar of the documents than with the human lives which we see dimly behind them, those scholars appear to forget that it was living property in the shape of men and of women that was being bought and sold. When, for instance, we are told, in reference to the Assyrian contract which reveals that a brother had sold his sister, that that stroke of business "was no worse than putting her into a convent," the comparison hardly appears to be valid.[1] Even although in this particular case such an analogy were found to be appropriate, it is a strange conclusion that "nothing whatsoever can be built upon this single instance *save* the fact that a man technically had the right to sell his sister." That fact is in itself sufficient to illuminate in a startling manner an era in which the possession of rights involved the infliction of wrongs. Many writers appear to have found great satisfaction in the belief that at Babylon slaves owned property; but if we examine the evidence it is of a very baffling kind. To begin with, however, it is certain that a slave was capable of owning other slaves. According to Mr. Johns, the slave "could hold both men-servants and maid-servants.

[1] "Assyrian Deeds and Documents," vol. iii. p. 431.

We may note, however, that he himself is sold with his slaves. . . . This is as far as we can go in asserting that the slave owned property."[1] But it will be admitted that this is not very far. And when Mr. Johns states that this same slave, master of wretches more wretched than himself, "probably had more real freedom than any other who ever bore the name of slave," we find it impossible to adopt such a method of valuation of human misery. The burden of these men who were at once slaves and masters "only consisted," says Mr. Johns, "in their tributary condition" to masters above them. Let us suppose that the burden was as light as a feather, and glance for a moment at the slaves of the slave. What was the burden of their condition? These degrees of bondage seem to lead down to the strangest moral chaos of which any city has ever been the scene.

33. Even, however, although slaves owned property in the ordinary sense, the number of such proprietors must have been small. Mr. Johns does not hesitate to admit that there is no satisfactory proof of this ownership. "Time after time," he says, "the party to a transaction is called Ardu Ša, 'the slave,' of some one. When he buys and sells, bearing such a description, is he the owner of the property or is he merely the agent of his master? . . . Agency might be generally suspected, and it is difficult to disprove."[2] This passage appears to throw doubt on the supposition that slaves owned property at all. Nevertheless, it is necessary to explain the state of affairs revealed in the following case. There was a certain Nabu-utirri, a slave of Itti-Marduk-balatu, who was a great Babylonian merchant. The slave acted as a money-changer, and presided at a *bureau de change* in one of the streets at Babylon. A document

[1] Vol. iii. 381. [2] Ibid., pp. 374, 375.

has been discovered in which his transactions and his relations to his master are made clear.[1] Thus, on one occasion his earnings at his money-stall amounted to five and a half minæ. For every mina he was bound by agreement to pay 10 shekels to his master, and on the occasion in question he paid 55 shekels. Now, this curious relationship is to be explained by the fact that those slaves who displayed high intellectual qualities or commercial ability were employed by their masters for purposes of speculation. If a slave were clever and energetic, it was obviously good policy to grant him his liberty on condition that he should pay a fixed yearly sum and a percentage on his earnings. As Mr. Johns remarks, such slaves would do better business on such conditions than if the master seized everything. The slaves' liberty was thus the result of a bargain, and we know from other contracts that if the bargain was ever broken by the slave the penalty was re-enslavement. In other words, the master had become the parasite of his slave; and if such instances were numerous it is no matter of surprise that a society so constituted came to a violent end.

34. We are, however, no longer dependent only upon stray business documents for our knowledge of the inner life of Babylon. These and the letters which have been discovered and translated are of the greatest value, but, after all, the information which they give us is somewhat spasmodic and intermittent. They would form, at best, the basis only of a kind of patchwork history. But in the Code of Hammurabi, which was discovered by De Morgan, we possess a document which, although brief, gathers up in a very striking manner the entire life of the State. It would not be too much to say that before this discovery had been made Babylon was scarcely known. No mere accumulation of sculptured

[1] *Aus dem Babylonischen Rechtsleben*, Kohler und Peiser, i. p. 1.

fragments and inscriptions belonging to separate epochs and eras of her existence, and no mere collection of the statements of ancient writers concerning her mystery, could help us really to understand her. The Code is the best proof of that political cohesion which she really attained, and of the continuity of her social organisation and of its rigidity. It does for Babylon what the Laws of Manu do for Hindustan; and, like Manu, it too betrays signs of being a recension of a still earlier legal system. Although it is concerned with many other things besides the slave traffic, it is too important to be neglected, because it is the authentic picture not merely of the day's work but of the ideals of justice at Babylon. Its existence had been long suspected. Fragments had been found in the library of Assurbanipal, and, moreover, numerous contracts were seen to be based upon it. But the world was hardly prepared to find a series of statutes which indicate a civilisation already old and full of social prejudice and of the struggle of class against class. By his letters Hammurabi had already been known as a vigorous ruler who spared no pains in the redress of ordinary wrong. He was the sixth king of the first dynasty, and seems to have reigned about fifty years. Some writers reckon his date to have been 2250 B.C., others about 2000 B.C. At any rate, it was he who, more than any other king after Sargon I., reorganised Babylon as the political centre of the empire. His edicts ran throughout Mesopotamia. Both in the prologue and in the epilogue to his laws he styles himself "a righteous king," and one born to deliver the weak from oppression. Unfortunately this claim is by no means justified. As in the case of Manu, the entire machinery of justice is set in motion by Hammurabi on behalf of a minority. It is precisely this strange contradiction between theory

and practice which makes the study of these ancient systems a matter of modern interest. On the one hand, we discover the most elaborate precautions for the maintenance of the rights of privileged individuals, and, on the other, the destruction of rights altogether. Thus, although the Code enacts that "if a man has committed highway robbery he shall be put to death" (22), the robbery of human freedom was legalised and made the basis of industrial organisation. It was a crime to steal a man's purse, but it was not a crime to steal liberty from the slave. Again, as in Manu, an offender is punished with far greater severity when he injures an *amêlu* or patrician than when he injures an *ardu* or slave. "If a man has knocked out the eye of a patrician, his eye shall be knocked out" (196); but "if he has knocked out the eye or broken the limb of a patrician's slave, he shall pay half his value" (199). Here the damages are to be paid not to the slave but to his master; in other words, if it had been the master's ox that had been injured instead of his slave, compensation would have been paid in the same manner. As a matter of fact, it was paid at the same rate, for, according to paragraph 247 of the Code, "If a man has hired an ox, and knocked out its eye, he shall pay to the owner half its value." These laws are sufficient (1) to prove that at Babylon the average slave was treated as an animal, and (2) to disprove the statement of many writers that he possessed any "advantages."

35. The Code betrays a deep knowledge of human nature, and there is hardly a paragraph without interest. The following enactment, for instance, indicates the keenest observation and a prolonged study of motives: "If a fire has broken out in a man's house, and one who has come to put it out has coveted the property of the householder, and appropriated any of it, that man shall

be cast into the self-same fire" (25).[1] Property, indeed, is the main concern in these laws, and it is only as a form of living property that the slave is mentioned at all. The Code is far more interested in trade, building, shipping, land, and marriage. The fact that burglary was punished by death is a proof how early and how fiercely the rights of property were defended. And, indeed, it was only in so far as he was property that the slave obtained even a chance of tolerable treatment. If his person was respected at all, it was not for his sake, but because his master was authorised to retaliate in case of injury. The entire system is the genuine product of a great commercial and bourgeois community who acted as a kind of buffer between the aristocracy and the slaves. There is even an amusing instance of snobbery. A veterinary surgeon is placed among the ranks of tradesmen, inasmuch as he is said to receive "wages" or "hire" (224), whereas doctors and men of science, such as shipbuilders, receive an "honorarium" (221, 228).[2] We are surprised to discover, however, that within certain limits it is not merely a code of justice but of equity. When not treating of the status of the slave it enounces the sanest regulations. The rights of aliens are safeguarded (40); the relations between principal and agent are made clear (100–107); the responsibilities of merchants and of bankers (124), and the duties and obligations of husbands and of wives (138–153), are all ordained. Here, for instance, is a law which modern states might be glad to possess: "If the highwayman has not been arrested, the man that has been robbed shall state on oath what he has lost, and the city or

[1] The paragraph is from Mr. Johns' translation.

[2] Mr. Johns uses the word "fee" in paragraphs 224, 228, but Scheil and Winckler emphasise the difference by using respectively *salaire* and *cadeau*, *Lohn* and *Geschenk*.

district governor in whose territory or district the robbery took place shall restore to him what he has lost" (23). Now and again we stumble upon strange moral surprises. Thus, concubinage was favourable to liberty, inasmuch as on the death of a father his children by a slave woman obtained their freedom (170, 171). Moreover, whereas in Hindustan the Sudra who married an Aryan woman was visited by dreadful punishment, in Babylon it seems to have been not uncommon for a slave to marry a free woman. What is more important is that the children of such a *mésalliance* were free (175). There are signs that justice was slumbering only lightly in Babylon, and was sometimes even on the verge of awakening. Thus, "if a man has incurred a debt, and a storm has flooded his field or carried away the crop, or the corn has not grown because of drought, in that year he shall not pay his creditor. Further, he shall post-date his bond and shall not pay interest for that year" (48). Such a statute appears to sacrifice the creditor to the debtor, but at least it is an attempt to aid an honourable bankrupt.

36. All such laws, however, were framed on behalf of those who already possessed property. In their shrewdness they are typically Semitic, and indicate that the power of money had already made immense strides in the world. Ruthless as the Laws of Manu are, they nevertheless contain now and again an appeal to the more generous elements in human nature. But when the Code of Hammurabi passes from the regulation of trade and banking to mention the slaves, without whom all that high finance could never have existed, it still expresses the pitiless language of political economy. In spite of itself, however, it occasionally reveals as by a sudden flash the dark places of the immense city. "If a debtor has handed over a male

or a female slave to work off a debt, and the creditor proceeds to sell these slaves, no one can complain" (118). Not even the slaves. What would we not give to be able to observe them both as they furtively scrutinise the face of the new master in order to guess what treatment they may expect? Even more significant of all sorts of strange crime is the following paragraph: "If a man has corn or money due from another man, and has levied a distraint, and the hostage has died a natural death in the house of the creditor, he cannot be held responsible. If the hostage has died of blows or want in the house of the creditor, the owner of the hostage shall prosecute his creditor, and if the deceased were free born, the creditor's son shall be put to death: *if a slave, the creditor shall pay one-third of a mina of silver*" (115, 116). Many slaves must have perished in those scuffles in the private houses of Babylon before such a law was enacted. But, as usual, the value of their lives is expressed only in terms of their master's pecuniary loss. They never knew into whose hands they might fall. At any moment they might be despatched as hostages to work off a debt which would take years to liquidate (117). For instance, we possess a curious contract in which a man agreed to give up his washerwoman as a pledge until the debt was paid.

37. There is great difficulty in understanding the exact social position of a class of slaves who were gradually evolved out of a luxurious civilisation and were allotted the higher domestic duties. As we have seen, in many cases these men appear to have represented their masters in business and even in the law courts. But such slaves were only a scanty minority in the midst of a vast servile population. According to Mr. Johns, in Assyrian times the slave "could contract like a free man." But according to the Code of Hammurabi

this was prohibited. If any one transacted business with a slave, except by power of attorney, he was put to death (7). Thus, if Babylonian law regulated Assyrian customs, as all writers maintain, this special permission must be considered as an exception. It is perfectly likely, however, that clever slaves gained an ascendency over their masters, and gradually raised themselves to a level of comparative liberty. But when we are told that although the slave possessed no property he could yet buy his freedom, we appear to be face to face with a contradiction. If the property of a slave belonged to the master, manumission cannot have been a purchase but a gift. That it was a gift or a purchase ever within reach of the great mass of slaves it is impossible to believe. The general statement that "the slave could become a free citizen and rise to the highest offices of the State," appears to transform an exception into a rule. One cause which is said to have made promotion possible was that the slave was often of the same race and religion as the family which he served. And yet we are told that "the large number of slaves had been captives in war."[1] There must have been some difference in their treatment.

38. Even, however, when the slave gained his liberty, it was a precarious liberty. It meant merely that the tether which bound him had been lengthened. It was liable to be shortened according to the caprice of the master. Moreover, liberty was taxed. In return for the great gift, the slave was compelled by law to support his master by a yearly income. A master who had become bankrupt might liberate a clever slave, and thus be able to live ever afterwards on the slave's industry. There is a document in which it is stated that a liberated slave who, in defiance of the contract, had ceased to provide

[1] Sayce, p. 67.

his master with "food and clothing" was recalled into slavery. But the men who enjoyed even this ambiguous freedom must have been, in the eyes of the vast mass of the people in bondage, a hated minority. The ex-slave, who put on the airs of a lackey, found that his interests were now bound up with the interests of his former enemies. As the parvenu generally becomes a violent reactionary, so, the emancipated slave frequently developed into a tyrant. Thus, as we have seen, contracts have been discovered in which slaves are actually seen to have possessed slaves of a still lower grade, so that even bondage had its hierarchy.

39. It is surprising that a society so organised was capable of so great duration. And yet from the beginning Babylon contained in dangerous abundance the elements of her own dissolution. She invented hereditary luxury and hereditary labour, and attempted to create a mechanical and unnatural relation between them. In herself she was a world, but it was a world split into hemispheres mutually hostile. She was Capitalism resting upon unpaid and involuntary Labour. In sight of so much suffering, her wealth and her luxury were a kind of blasphemy. Those whose slavery made her great were denied even rudimentary rights, and they were compelled to witness her insolent parade. They had no interest in her continuance, and they were ready to welcome her enemies. Yet, when we consider how often those enemies came upon her like the sand-storms of her own desert, and how even the Assyrians who were her sons let loose their matricidal fury against her, and how she withstood those internal convulsions which are never absent from so great a State, we can only marvel at her vitality and resistance. No doubt the causes of her fall were not merely intramural: they were also extramural. History is filled with irony, but perhaps its

most ironical fact is that a State's most deadly enemy has frequently been its own offspring. The real external enemy of Babylon was Assyria. Apart altogether from the dynastic troubles which brought both states into collision, and apart from the special vengeance of a man like Sennacherib, the strength of Babylon was being sapped by secret, impersonal, and economic causes. Assyria had begun to challenge her commercial supremacy. Nineveh was nearer the route to the Mediterranean, and that was the route of trade. The traffic which used to reach Babylon stopped at Nineveh, which had become the new terminus. More than once Babylon, conscious that the way to the West was now effectually blocked, attempted to cut a road through the desert. But the desert was dangerous, and swarmed with hordes of robbers. Caravans which left the city never returned. Moreover, there was no water *en route*, and the teams and their drivers died of privation. The keys of trade had irrevocably passed from the hands of the mother to the daughter State. In other words, we notice for the first time the shifting of the centre of commercial enterprise from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean. In the great circular movement of the world's trade Babylon once played an immense part, and that is the chief reason why her history belongs to the West as well as to the East. But she was only a stage of the movement, and was at last left behind. She was compelled to face enemies on all sides. Owing to the rise of the Aryan Powers, Media and Persia, on the eastern frontier, her grasp on the shores of the Persian Gulf likewise gradually relaxed. As Assyria blocked the way towards Phœnicia and Egypt, Persia blocked the way towards India. Babylon was crippled. No doubt she rallied under Nebuchadnezzar, but it was only during half a century. It is no wonder, indeed, that after such a pro-

longed and tremendous experiment in the government of men she began to show signs of exhaustion.

40. The disappearance of a State is to be explained either by her own inner disorders, or by the growth of powerful and aggressive enemies, or by a combination of both those causes. In Babylon they combined in such a manner that the result was nothing less than obliteration. Yet, just as in war the moral factor is to the physical as four to one, we cannot doubt that if the walls of Babylon had really contained within them a coherent and united people, those walls might never have fallen, or at least they might have withstood still longer the siege of Nemesis and of Time. It was because the State was fundamentally divided against itself that Cyrus was able to come like a thief in the night and take it by surprise "when the roads were 539 B.C.
dark." It is profoundly significant that the Aryan invader arrived at the very moment when the city was plunged in debauch. It is true that many a strong and well-governed state may succumb before still stronger enemies, but it is far truer that a state's moral decline invites attack. Given a nation organised like Babylon, how could she last? She was unjust, and there is no permanence outside justice. The fact that every new conqueror was hailed with acclamation by her populace is a proof of their immense weariness. Both Cyrus and Alexander were received with shouts of joy by a vast multitude assembled on the walls. A great mass of human beings sunk in slavery, and living in slums where life must have been at least as degraded as it is in Shoreditch, Hoxton, and other parts of modern London, can have possessed no national interests. The peril of the State was not theirs. There was labour without wages, an immense activity without any well-being, and a fearful monotony of existence. There was justice, but it

belonged to a few, and had never penetrated the great dumb labouring population. The State was no genuine organism in which mutual sacrifice is expected from every part, or if it was an organism it was half mortified. The leaders of the people were sunk in luxury, and when the moment of danger arrived they expected slaves to fight for them. Babylon was great. She used Science, and she used Art, but she abused Humanity. She invented sundials, but forgot to regulate with justice the hours of labour. She could calculate a star's eclipse, but not her own. No State has been more guilty of the waste of human life. And when we see her ruins lying like a vast, mysterious autograph scrawled over the desert, her history appears to be full of warning.

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CHAPTER IV

GREECE

It is a hard task to mend the broken bridges of history, and to trace the old disused roads of human kinship. Nevertheless, the study of origins often helps us to discover a startling intimacy between peoples geographically remote. The first appearance of a nation as a fixed community is only the last stage of a long wandering. History, which is the diary of mankind, has been carelessly kept, and sometimes we do not know whether the blank spaces and the meagre entries represent ages of activity or of stagnation, union or disunion, peace or war. Empires, like the Empire of the Hittites, have almost dropped out of the record, and have left little more than a few names graven on a few tombs. And what, for instance, was happening in Europe during the thousands of years of the life of Babylon? The greater part of it was sunk in gloom. Even so late as the age of Julius Cæsar (50 B.C.), Europe was half covered by a forest which stretched from the banks of the Rhine for unknown distances. Cæsar made inquiries among the Germans regarding the extent of that Hercynian Forest, which was full of wild animals; but the Germans told him that although they had travelled through it ceaselessly during two months, they had been compelled to turn back because no limit to it was visible.[1] It was,

[1] "Neque quisquam est huius Germaniæ, qui se aut adisse ad initium eius silvæ dicat, cum dierum iter lx processerit, aut, quo ex loco oriatur, acceperit; multaque in ea genera ferarum nasci constat, quæ reliquis in locis visa non sint" (*De Bello Gall.*, vi. 25).

indeed, partly because the woods were so dense that agriculture penetrated Europe so late. According to Cæsar, neither the Britons nor the Germans of his own time were agricultural peoples, and they retained their nomadic habits till far into the historical period. Yet, ages before the sound of any axe broke the stillness of European forests, a brilliant civilisation had bloomed and had decayed on the Greek shore which is nearest Asia. It is a far cry from Hindustan, or even from Babylon, to Argos and to Athens, yet when we arrive in Greece and attempt to examine the beginnings of her civilisation we are compelled to look back to the Orient. The Greeks were known by the name of Javan or Javanas from the Nile to the Ganges. Some scholars believe, while others disbelieve, that the word is Aryan; but in any case, in all its forms, European, African, or Asiatic, it represents the Ionians, who played so great a part in the history of Greece. The writer of the Book of Genesis (x. 2, 4) knew them as the "Sons of Javan," who inhabited "the isles of the Gentiles," that is, the islands of the Ægean Sea; and this reference implies that the Greeks carried on an early maritime trade in the eastern Mediterranean. Indeed, they were known in the Orient long before they became known to Western Europe. We have already seen that one of the great mysteries of history is that their language was related to the language spoken in India. But the racial chain, if such it was, which stretched from Asia to Europe was snapped at various points. It was because we found it snapped in Western Asia that we were compelled to fill up the gap by an account of Babylon, a power which, in ways too many to be neglected, influenced the course of history. But now we shall rediscover in Greece certain links of the broken chain—links of language and even of religion, if not of race, and,

what is more important, links of the same long chain of social error.

2. Asia Minor has been described as a vast bridge connecting the Valley of the Euphrates with the Ægean Sea. It was over that bridge that many early movements of races and of trade took place between the East and the West. It is probable, however, that the bridge once extended from the Asiatic to the European shore across the Ægean. For that sea is full of islands, many of which are volcanic, and a continuity of soil certainly connected some of them. Thera, for instance, which lies between the Cyclades and Crete, was once joined to Therasia. It is still a volcanic centre, and it formed part of a great seismic system which extended throughout the Ægean and made its influence felt on the mainland of Greece. Geologists suppose that the disaster which overtook Thera occurred about 2000 B.C., and was caused by the subsidence of a volcanic cone. If similar catastrophes took place throughout the eastern Mediterranean, lands once united became disunited, and, like Crete and Cyprus, were left in isolation. Thus the earliest foundations of that prehistoric culture whose continuity we observe between the Ægean islands and Asia on the one hand, and the same islands and the Greek mainland on the other, may have been laid long before the era of navigation. However this may be, there is the clearest evidence that before the eruption at Thera a civilisation whose affinities are Asiatic as well as European had flourished early in the island. The oldest name of Thera, Καλλίστη, is admitted even by the opponents of the theory of the Asiatic origin of Ægean culture to be traceable to an Asiatic root.[1] In degree of civilisation Thera stood midway between

[1] The root is *Khal*, and it is believed to be Hittite. *Cf.* Reinach, *Chroniques d'Orient* (1896), p. 489.

Troy and Mycenæ. Beneath its tufa, and embedded in its lava, modern excavators found prehistoric dwellings, full of stone implements, pottery, and even stored barley. No metal utensils appear to have been seen, but the style of the pottery indicates an advance on the earliest specimens from the oldest deposits at Troy. Whereas the primitive Trojan vases are monochrome, at Thera they are sometimes covered by floral and other designs, wrought in different colours. On the other hand, Thera was in arrear of such great cities as Tiryns and Mycenæ on the Hellenic mainland, for among *their* débris traces of a far higher and later culture have been found. The chronological problem remains unsolved, but it appears to be certain that during a period which was pre-Hellenic, and even pre-Phœnician, the south-eastern coasts of Greece, the coasts of Asia Minor and of Syria, the Ægean islands and Egypt, all shared a common civilisation. The entire period comprising the stone, copper, and bronze ages ranged from about 3000 till 1000 B.C. The stone age and the bronze age are seen to have overlapped each other in different regions, and there is no break of continuity. At Tiryns the knives and arrow-heads of obsidian are as rudely made as those found in the cave dwellings of Central Europe. Stone hammers and spinning whorls, corn-bruisers of granite, porphyry, and quartz, and embroidering needles made of bone, indicate the first steps of civilisation. But progress was rapid. Pottery made by hand was replaced by pottery made by help of the wheel. If, on the whole, palæolithic industry is poorly represented on Greek soil, the reason is to be found in an early contact with Oriental metal-work. Mycenæan civilisation belongs essentially to the bronze age, for men already knew how to amalgamate copper and tin. Bronze razors have been found at Mycenæ, in

Attica, and at Delphi. In the primitive period, however, iron was unknown, and when it appears in later deposits, it is in the form of ornaments. Gold, however, was known early. Homer calls Mycenæ the "much golden," and in the second millennium there was an active trade in the precious metals between Mycenæ and Troy. The resemblance between such manufactured objects as the vases found on both sides of the Ægean and in Egypt proves the existence of uninterrupted commerce. At Eleusis, for instance, Trojan pottery lay side by side with pottery from Mycenæ. Moreover, the closest agreement is seen to have existed between the architectural systems of Tiryns and of Troy, and the same forms of decoration, such as the spiral ornament, are found in Greece, Asia Minor, and Egypt. On a bronze sword attributed to the sixteenth century B.C., and bearing the name of an Egyptian king, Amenhotep, the design has been seen to be similar in every respect to the design enchased on Mycenæan daggers.

3. But this Ægean civilisation, which thus linked peoples in Europe, Africa, and Asia, did not consist in mere casual borrowings of industrial and artistic method. Among certain of the groups a deeper culture had been inherited and shared. For instance, a system of writing, older by many centuries than the alphabet of the Phœnicians, connected Crete with Asia and Egypt on one side and with Argos on the other. Symbols discovered in Crete are found to be the same as those carved on the gems and ivory of Mycenæ. There appear, indeed, to have been two kinds of Cretan writing—one pictographic, resembling the hieroglyphs of Egypt, and another linear and almost alphabetic, resembling the early script of Cyprus.[1] Ideographs of the human body, the human eye and hand, oxen, birds, fish,

[1] Evans, "Cretan Pictographs," p. 5.

arrow-heads, and pictures of the crescent moon, all indicate that there was in use a system whereby thought and language were transferred to permanent materials such as clay, ivory, and stone. It is a remarkable fact that the pictographs were used chiefly if not only in the eastern part of Crete—that is to say, on the side nearer Asia. A closer scrutiny has shown that they belong to a system invented in northern Syria. Indeed, this discovery has been claimed in confirmation of the theory that the Ægean civilisation had an Oriental, and more particularly a Pelasgian or Hittite basis.[1] Among the eighty Cretan symbols the majority are said to incline rather towards the Asiatic side, and the view has been expressed that this ancient script formed part of the system out of which the later Phœnician alphabet was developed. In any case, a common language and a common mode of writing were shared among certain of the Ægean peoples who traded with Crete. This prehistoric intimacy, however, was still deeper, for religious ideas were likewise borrowed or exchanged. A mysterious worship of sacred stones, pillars, and trees had spread from Syria through the islands to Greece, and was perhaps the central element in Mycenæan faith. Here we are met by one of those startling relationships which betray the entanglement of Asiatic and European religions. The word Bethel, which came to Jacob's lips when he awoke from his troubled dream under the Syrian sky,[2] reappears in Greece as Βαίτυλος, the *bætyl* or sacred pillar. For the pillar which is guarded by lions at the gate of Mycenæ is now believed to represent a pillar shrine,

[1] De Cara, iii. 449. *Cf.* ii. 134 *et sqq.*

[2] "And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel" (Gen. xxviii. 18, 19).

and it takes us back to a period when the god and the altar were almost identified. In the struggle towards purer and more abstract religious conceptions, even the monotheistic Semites found it hard to abandon those symbols by means of which they first became religiously articulate. But Syrian influence appeared in other ways in prehistoric Greece; for while in the royal palace at Tiryns an open space was left for the altar of Zeus,[1] the great Aryan sky god, a form of whose name we found in India, other gods of Asia were to join Zeus in the Hellenic Pantheon. The people who had contributed a great part of the Cretan alphabet, the Hittites, were the earliest intermediaries between the Aryan and Semitic religions. They carried Nana of Babylon to Asia Minor, where she was transformed into the Artemis of Ephesus, and later she became the Ashtoreth of Canaan. The cooing of her doves, however, was early heard in the Ægean islands and on the mainland of Greece as far as Corinth. It was round this Astarte that many new Aryan myths accumulated. It has been supposed that because in the Odyssey the dove bears nectar to Zeus, that symbol was not originally or exclusively Semitic. But surely before the date of the Odyssey there had been time for Oriental influence to work upon Greek religion. Rude clay and terra-cotta idols of Astarte, with the doves hovering above her head, have been found in the most ancient deposits in Greece and the islands, and they belong to the same type as the idols of Cyprus. Those rude images buried deep in European soil are of profound interest, because they indicate once more the immemorial contact of Europe and Asia. This civilisation which was kindled like a beacon on the Greek shore,

[1] Adler, p. 20. If Tiryns was not founded by Greeks, the worship of Zeus must have been introduced by the Greek invaders.

ages before the Greeks of history heard of it in the poems of Homer, was, after all, first lighted in the East. With Astarte there came to Greece the gold and luxury of Asia. No one, indeed, has been able to discover the original centre of distribution of Ægean culture. We hear now of the influence of Babylon, now of Egypt, Phrygia, and Phœnicia. So complex a civilisation had doubtless its source in complex causes, and perhaps many of the theories founded upon the different kinds of pottery are as fragile as the pottery itself. So far as origins are concerned, we are left with little except a series of interrogations. But it is admitted that apart from Eastern influence Mycenæan civilisation would be unintelligible. When, for example, a Mycenæan artist wished to represent a war-chariot he reproduced, "even in details," the chariots of Mesopotamia.[1] Whereas the later Hellenic peoples knew Oriental art only in its decay, their forerunners felt it in its prime. Amid their older stone jars, stone spoons, and stone cups, and other rude domestic vessels and implements which have been disinterred, we find articles of luxury imported from the East or manufactured after Eastern models—gold necklaces, bracelets, and cups, a gold diadem, bronze mirrors, ivory handles and silver spoons, amber pearls,[2] and gold masks for the faces of the dead. The stone roofs of their palaces were chiselled in foreign designs, and the walls were adorned with blue glass from Egypt. The façades of their royal tombs were an imitation of Oriental bas-reliefs. They worked in agate and onyx, chalcedony, amethyst, and jasper, and on their rings they reproduced the intaglios of the seals of Babylon. It was as if the East had stretched out her jewelled hand towards Europe.

4. There is a theory according to which this pre-

[1] Tsountas, p. 351.

[2] Amber, however, came from the north.

historic civilisation in southern Greece, although it was under a great debt to the Orient, was essentially a native growth, and belonged to the Achæans. Another and probably a more correct view, however, is that the ancestors of the Greeks of history were not merely not the founders of that culture, but were only to a small extent its heirs. For if Greeks had laid its basis it is difficult to understand why their descendants should have remained so long untouched by its influence. The younger generation was compelled to learn anew many arts which had been forgotten. No doubt in the sixth century Athens was in some respects already a brilliant city, but the reason was that Pisistratus had invited foreign engineers and artists from Asia Minor to his court. Greece was still borrowing from abroad. The style of the earliest Attic pottery is inferior to that of the Mycenæan vases. Moreover, the Phaleric ware betrays the continued influence of foreign models in the use of such designs as winged creatures and the lotus. Even as late as the beginning of the fifth century the condition of Greece was still very rude.[1] It was not until after the Persian wars that Athenian civilisation began to outrival the ancient brilliance of the Mycenæan age. The earliest Greeks may have thus been incapable of absorbing the finer culture upon which they stumbled when they reached the base of the peninsula. But they appropriated the more solid elements in the work of their predecessors. On the Acropolis of Athens there have been found remains of a primeval fortress which was not built by Athenian or even by Attic hands, but belongs to the era of Tiryns and Orchomenos. We have little means, however, of knowing when and whence

[1] Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Von des Attischen Reiches Herrlichkeit*, p. 6. "Wirtschaftlich blieb das Land in den rohesten Verhältnissen; geistige Cultur, so weit sie überhaupt existirt hatte, verkam."

came the new invaders who gave Greece her final language and her historical name. Tradition points to the land east of the Adriatic, and Greek peoples already familiar with bronze implements appear to have been dwelling in Illyria at least at the beginning of the second millennium before our era.[1] We cannot believe that they entered the peninsula organised as a nation. It was not until late in their history, and perhaps only about 600 B.C., that they possessed even a common name. They entered Greece, as the Aryans entered Hindustan, in tribal formation. We are apt to suppose that the Greeks must have been always civilised, but they had passed through many rude stages before their first appearance in history. Their advance into the new home was slow, because prehistoric Greece was covered by dense forests, and even in the Homeric age was still deeply wooded. To the labour of conquest, therefore, was added the labour of clearing the land, draining its marshes, and fighting its Fauna, such as the lion, the bear, the wild boar, and the wolf. And, as in Hindustan, the invaders were soon at war among themselves. A common language and a common religion did not prevent the race breaking into splinters. The history of Greece is the history of disunion. And no doubt the fusion of different groups of the conquerors with the peoples whom they found in the country embittered the struggle. If even the relations between the later and larger Hellenic communities were always precarious, we can imagine how keen was the war as the soil was seized. That soil was agriculturally poor and was incapable of maintaining a great population. Hence we hear of forced migrations and displacements as communities expanded beyond their early boundaries and encroached on the boundaries of their neighbours. Violent tribal movements and col-

[1] Kretschmer, p. 153.

lisions, indeed, lay behind the creation of all the Greek States. When, at length, successful tribes had settled in the seats in which we find them when their history opens, they gave their names to the landscapes of Greece. Thus the names of States which became famous, such as Elis, Pisa, Messene, and Lacedæmon, can be traced back to the names of primitive village communites. Meantime we are chiefly interested in the fact that the most energetic of the Greek peoples were never content until they had reached the seaboard, for it was the command of the sea which shaped the main destiny of Greece.

5. Homer's "wine-dark" bright salt sea was to play a great part in the religious and practical life of the Greeks. It is significant that, according to their early traditions, Poseidon, their sea god, had fought for them at Troy. They remained true to his worship, and on the Acropolis of Athens he shared honours with Athena. Whoever has seen the Temple of Poseidon at Pæstum can understand the awe with which a Greek viewed the mysterious power which sunders and yet unites a race. It was on the eastern Mediterranean that the first great advances in navigation were made. We saw, indeed, that boats were built on the Indian rivers by the early Aryan conquerors, but such shipbuilding was of the most primitive kind. It is in the European languages that we first find a common word for "mast." The invention of mast and sail, the study of the winds and of their locomotive power, meant a new era for the world. The Greeks early took advantages of such discoveries. For although the Phœnicians were their immediate forerunners in maritime supremacy, the Greeks had reached Cyprus before they knew the Phœnician alphabet. And the Ægean islands and the coasts of Asia Minor received the overflow of their population as early as the thirteenth century B.C. After a few centuries they would be sailing

westwards. One of those facts which suddenly foreshorten for us the perspective of history is Thucydides' casual statement that a Greek people, the Phocæans, who owned a strong navy, founded Marseilles.[1] It is right to dwell upon this seizure of sea-power by the Greeks, because it marked the first great intervention of Europe in the world's affairs, and it is precisely owing to her maritime supremacy over Asia and Africa that that intervention has been so powerful and so prolonged. The coast-line of Europe is far nearer her centre than the Asiatic coast-line to the corresponding centre in Asia, and Europe produced a greater maritime population. No doubt there was early traffic on the Indian Ocean, the Persian Gulf, and the Red Sea, but that finer seamanship was taught on the Mediterranean was made known to the fleet of Xerxes. The real study of the winds began on the coasts of Europe, and it is there that naval vigour was created. It is worth noticing, too, that there is a great contrast between the sultry Persian Gulf, the poison wind of the desert, the hot languorous coasts of Arabia, and the clean wind and foam of the seas of Greece. As we leave Asia and approach Europe there is a certain fall of temperature, and it has its counterpart in history. The pulse of Europe has never been quite so feverish as the pulse of Asia. We shall meet nothing altogether like the torment of Babylon. The hordes of Asia lie behind. And although Eastern Europe and Western Asia were still to be entangled during many ages, yet Humanity's next great experiment was to be in the West. In the Odyssey the Elysian Fields are placed westward, in the setting sun.

6. Although the Greeks appear to have possessed no distinct word to express the modern idea of climate, yet Strabo praises the coasts of Greece, and especially of

[1] I. 14. The date was about 600 B.C.

Laconia, for their invigorating air. He, too, notices that the temperature is lower than in Asia,[1] and that on the European coasts life is busier. Maritime cities are more numerous, and "the arts are more flourishing." Strabo had forgotten, however, that once the Mediterranean had been a highway of Asiatic trade. Before the Ægean became a "Greek sea" it was a Phœnician sea. It would be dangerous to say that it was from the Phœnicians that the Greeks learned seamanship, because Greek nautical terms betray no Phœnician influence. Nevertheless, the statements of Homer and of Thucydides, and the archæological evidence of Phœnician activity, even on the Greek mainland, prove that during some two or three centuries the Phœnicians enjoyed a maritime lordship. Some scholars believe that such words as Megara, Salamis, Marathon, and Melite can be explained only on the supposition of Semitic colonisation in Greece.[2] Thebes in Bœotia was full of Semitic tradition. Thus piratical descents on the Greek coast must have been frequent. And it is remarkable that the Greek word for pirate is of Phœnician origin.[3] Piracy, in fact, was the first form of sea-borne commerce. There was a wind which the Greeks called the "Phœnician wind," and it blew from the south-east. It brought over from Asia boats with purple sails, manned by those Phœnicians whom Homer calls "famous mariners," "greedy merchantmen." The Ægean, thickly studded with islands, invited navigation, for in clear weather one island was often visible from another, and sailors sailed from cape to cape. The History of Herodotus opens with a vivid picture of a Phœnician bazaar at

[1] II. 5, 18.

[2] "Leere Spielereien," says Beloch, *Geschichte*, i. p. 76. On the other hand, he admits (p. 74) that before the eighth century Phœnician shippers frequently landed in Greece. *Cf.* Busolt, *Geschichte*, i. p. 52.

[3] Lenormant, i. p. 54.

Argos, and we see in a flash the strange chaos of the Mediterranean in that early age. The Phœnicians, we are told, exposed their merchandise on the beach for about five or six days. After many bargains had been made, some women, still intent upon purchases, came down to the shore, and among them was Io, the daughter of the king. She and her friends were standing near the sterns of the ships, when the Phœnician sailors with a general shout rushed upon them, and carried off Io and her friends to Egypt.[1] Thus kidnapping was common. Thucydides tells us that there was a time when no disgrace was attached to piracy. But the Phœnician sails seen on the horizon must have often brought terror to the islanders. Before proper commercial relations were established, the Phœnicians seized by *force majeure* the raw materials for their manufactures. It has been pointed out by modern writers that not the Phœnicians but the Greeks held the supplies of iron. As long, however, as the Greeks were still weak in navies and in land forces, they were probably compelled to supply the iron to their more powerful rivals. The Phœnicians took sulphur and alum from Melos, emery from Naxos, gold from Thasos, and they ransacked the islands and the mainland for slaves. "They traded," says Ezekiel, "the persons of men." Piracy, indeed, was not put down, and commerce on fair principles was not carried on, until the Greeks began to increase the number of their ships. It was only when they met the Phœnicians on equal terms on the sea that piracy was checked and barter was established. The Achæans bartered iron for wine. The oldest Phœnician city was Byblos, which gave its name to a wine that was drunk in Crete, in Chios, in Naxos, and in Greece. The date-palm, too, appears to have spread to the islands from Phœnicia, the

[1] I. I.

land of palms. The Phœnicians carried Asiatic freights. Hence was prolonged that Oriental influence which, as we saw, had already been deeply felt by Mycenæan art. It is believed, for instance, that it was from the heavy embroidery of Assyria that Greek artists chose some of their early designs. But Greece never came into direct relations with Assyria, and the Phœnicians appear to have acted as middlemen. It is even held that they were the means of transmitting to the Greeks "the alphabet of art" as well as the alphabet of language. Scenes which Homer describes as having adorned the shield of Achilles are rediscovered on Phœnician vases, and such vases or similar Oriental work had been the basis of the poet's description. The artistic traditions of the Valley of the Euphrates were thus brought to Europe, and sometimes the actual gestures and attitudes in Oriental design were reproduced. Art and trade, indeed, became international at a far earlier date than we are apt to suppose. Phœnicia, as broker between East and West, not only brought Asiatic things to Europe, but took European things to Asia. For instance, much of the famous Tyrian purple was manufactured from the *murex* which was discovered on the coasts of Greece. That industry, however, was a very old one, because vase fragments with representations of the purple shell were found among the ruins of Mycenæ and Tiryns. But the Phœnicians appear to have inherited the markets of the Mycenæan age. Their first hostile contact with the Greeks probably took the form of fishery disputes, since off the Greek coasts a specially valuable species of the *murex* was found. The ships of the strangers arrived every spring, and no doubt it was from the purple that the Greeks gave the Phœnicians their name. It used to be supposed that "Phœnician" should be derived from the Greek word for

"palm-tree" (φοῖνιξ), because a palm-tree is found on the coats of arms of Carthage and Tyre.[1] But the primary meaning of the Greek word *phœnix* was "purple," and the Greeks knew the purple before they saw the palm-trees of Phœnicia. The dye was of so great value that the Greeks soon began to make it for themselves, and the fame of their own manufacture spread into Asia, where it rivalled the dyes of India and of Babylon. For when Alexander the Great captured Susa he discovered among its treasures 5000 talents in weight of purple silk which, according to Plutarch, had been dyed in Greece. At that time Phœnician trade in the eastern Mediterranean had dwindled, and the Greeks had surpassed Orientals both
400 B.C. in manufactures and in art. For the day came when Greek vases were in demand on both sides of the Mediterranean and as far as Etruria, when Greek architecture and ornament were seen in Syria and at Carthage, and when Greek music was heard at Sidon. Phœnicia was like a swing-door which opens both ways. At one moment Oriental influence passed through, and at another Greek influence passed back. We have already seen that a primitive alphabet was known to the Mycenæan age, but the alphabet which was used by Æschylus and Aristotle was of Phœnician origin, and it was Phœnicia's greatest gift. Greece, in fact, was being equipped for her historical task by a study of Oriental methods and achievements. With the help of the East she became articulate, and it was another Eastern invention—coinage—which consolidated her economic system. It seems, however, that even in the Homeric age the Greeks possessed a unit of weight, the Talanton,[2] or the value of a cow in gold. Metallic currency is usually supposed to

[1] Movers, p. 2.

[2] Ridgeway, "Origin of Metallic Currency," p. 304.

have been invented in Lydia, and afterwards to have spread towards Greece. But the discovery of silver Æginetan coins which seem to be older than the oldest silver coins of Asia Minor, has recently[1] raised the question whether, after all, Greece owed her currency to Eastern influence. Coins, however, may have been used as private pledges in Greece before the State set its seal upon them and guaranteed their value. On the authority of Herodotus, Lydian kings are believed to have been the first to accept this responsibility. In any case, the influence of Eastern measures of value on the Greek system is again made evident by the adoption of the Babylonian unit, the mina. For its introduction stimulated Greek commercial enterprise.

7. Ancient trade was peculiarly connected with ancient religion. We find, for example, on the early Æginetan coins which circulated in Greece the symbol of Astarte, the Phœnician goddess of trade as well as of love. We have already seen that she too was known among the older Ægean peoples. But it was at the hands of Greek artists that she received a finer form of plastic beauty than ever an Asiatic artist gave her. The discovery of a Semitic shrine at Thebes, and of traces of the worship of Astarte at Corinth, seem to make it idle to deny that Phœnician settlements had once actually taken place on the mainland. But with Astarte came her bridegroom Adonis. In the history of belief there is probably no more remarkable fact than that the Adonis known to the Greeks possessed one of the names by which the children of Israel knew Jehovah. When that name (Adon, Adonai) reached Europe its meaning had undergone an extraordinary change. Not, indeed, that the Phœnician conception of a god of beauty and of passion had not even penetrated Israel, and

[1] "Historical Greek Coins," by G. F. Hill, 1906.

had not been denounced by her prophets. Ezekiel throws a very startling light upon the dangers which threatened to change the religion of Jehovah into a Phœnician religion of nature. Adonis, or Tammuz, was once actually worshipped by the Israelites. Ezekiel saw "women weeping for Tammuz," and "the thick cloud of incense that went up" in that god's honour, and "the abominations which the ancients of the house of Israel" practised in the god's name.[1] This is a proof that even the Israelites had felt that current of strange desire which troubled all forms of ancient worship. For the adoration of Adonis had spread far and wide on both sides of the Mediterranean.[2] Wherever the Phœnicians went Aphrodite (Astarte) and Adonis (Tammuz) went with them. In the island of Cythera Astarte had a temple. But Cythera was only a stepping-stone to the Greek mainland, and there too the new worship took root. At Cape Malea there was a city called Sidæ, a colony of Sidon, and the colonists brought their idols. And although in the end the Phœnicians were driven out, their gods remained, Aphrodite and Adonis, representing the passion of Asia.

8. That in the crowded mythology of Greece there were other gods of Asiatic, and especially of Semitic character, there can be no doubt at all. Melkart of Tyre, for instance, was known to the Greeks as Melikertes, and was identified with Hercules. All the ancient mythologies, however, were hospitable to new gods. The maritime Greeks came in contact with various forms of worship, and hence it happened that

[1] Ezek. viii.

[2] "Comment se fit l'association du culte du Tres-Haut (Elioun) avec le culte de Tammuz? Ce culte fut il une forme organique et mystérieuse de la religion du Dieu suprême? Ou bien y eut-il là un de ces amalgames si fréquents dans l'histoire des cultes antiques? On l'ignore."—RENAN, p. 235.

their religion, which was fundamentally Aryan, was not closed against Semitic influences. But the central god of Greece, Zeus, was the Dyâús of the Hindus, and his name had actually travelled over two continents. Numerous influences were interblended in the confused multitude of Hellenic gods. There is a still deeper phase than either the Aryan or the Semitic, and it is to be found in the débris of savage ritual which undoubtedly lies embedded in Greek religion. Behind the Vedas, behind the Semitic religions, and behind the glittering mythology of Greece there are forbidding forms of ghost and animal worship. Every Greek temple had its origin in a fetich stone, and we are surprised to discover among the Bushmen of Australia myths fundamentally the same as the earliest myths of the Greeks.[1] There is the clearest evidence that Zeus was once worshipped as a snake. Indeed, all the Olympians had a darker side, and in their earliest forms they were demons. Behind the gorgeous and gay mythology there lurks a monstrous and appalling element. Even Apollo, the bright god of the sky, was often hostile to man. His name means "Destroyer," and he sent sudden affliction and death.[2] The Iliad opens with the sound of his arrows shot against the Greeks. He was the god of pestilence. He urged men to murder even their kinsmen. Sophocles makes Œdipus say, "Apollo brought all my woes upon me."[3] He was the terribly earnest god; but he only shared an element common to all Greek divinities. There was Demeter, for instance, who, although she was the placid

[1] "Custom and Myth," by A. Lang (1893), p. 53.

[2] As usual, Nietzsche exaggerates the "brightness" of Apollo. "Hier (*i.e.* in his worship) erinnert nichts an Askese, Geistigkeit und Pflicht; hier redet nur ein üppiges, ja triumphierendes Dasein zu uns, in dem alles Vorhandene vergöttlicht ist, gleichviel ob es gut oder böse ist" (*Die Geburt der Tragödie*, Leipzig, 1872, p. 11).

[3] *Æd. Tyr.*, 1329.

goddess of the fields, became a Fury in winter. There was Ate, who bewildered the mind by sudden and irrational impulse, and allowed men to perish of their own folly. There was Dionysus, who, although he was called "The Deliverer," was called also "The Devourer." He came to Greece with the "sunbeams" and perfumes of Asia upon him, and was the god of happy vineyards and the red vintage. Nevertheless, he was figured as a lion for fury, and the legend ran that when a king of Thebes scorned his worship he met, at the god's own hands, a dreadful end.

> "Oh, whoso walketh not in dread
> Of gods, let him but look on this man dead."[1]

It was in connection with this dark aspect of the gods that human sacrifice continued to exist in Greece even as late as the age of Herodotus (484–424 B.C.). We discovered the same phase in India. Not in legendary but in historical Greece, and on the eve of the battle of Salamis, Themistocles sacrificed three Persian youths to that same Dionysus. It is not certain how long human oblation formed part of the official ritual of the State. Perhaps even in the fifth century the yearly human scapegoats, called the "Pharmakoi," were led out of Athens to be killed in expiation of the offences of the people. And here again we are struck by the contrast of the humanity of Israel; for it was not a human being, it was an actual *goat*, which, in obedience to the strange and haunting rite, was not killed, but only led out to wander in the wilderness.

9. The shallow view of Greek mythology sees in it only a *chronique scandaleuse* or a fairy-tale. But we shall not understand the tragic history of Greece unless we grasp the fact that her destiny seems to be somehow foretold in her religion. The fact of the great multi-

[1] The *Bacchæ* of Euripides, translated by Gilbert Murray.

tude of gods is a proof that her religious imagination was still very restless. And that restlessness reappears in Greek politics. For just as we look in vain for any real unity in Greek religion, so we look in vain for any real unity in Greek history. Both are chaos. Attempts have been made to discover a Hellenic monotheism, but they have not been successful.[1] No doubt men like Anaxagoras, Æschylus, and Plato reached steadfast conceptions. Indeed, the hymn to Zeus in *Agamemnon* is profoundly monotheistic. And the fact that about 438 B.C. Phidias was commanded by the Athenian State to erect the great statue of Zeus at Olympia is a sign that a kind of monotheism was officially recognised. But in spite of the centralisation of worship at such temples as Olympia and Delphi, there remained a multitude of local gods claiming allegiance, and bewildering the pious Greek worshipper much as the devout Catholic is bewildered by his host of saints. It is precisely this crowded condition of Greek mythology which repels the modern world. Nevertheless, we shall fail to understand Greek character unless we detect behind the figures of fantastic gods ideas which are often profoundly ethical and human. For instance, although Aphrodite, goddess of passion, was believed to rule and overrule gods and men, she had no power over Athena, goddess of the mind and patron of the loom and of industry; no power over Artemis, the huntress, spirit of the clean air; and, what is still more significant, Aphrodite had no power over Hestia, the goddess and guardian of the hearth. Ideas like these bring Greek religion into contact with modern feeling, and they enable us to see the genuine earnestness of the

[1] See especially Nägelsbachs' *Die Homerische Theologie* (Nürnberg, 1840), p. 127, where *Moira* or Destiny is described as "Ein weiterer Versuch, das Bedürfniss des Menschengeistes nach monotheistischer Weltanschauung zu befriedigen." See also, to the same purpose, Preller's *Griechische Mythologie* (Leipzig, 1854), p. 73.

early Hellenic mind. That mind possessed a very wonderful power of giving plastic form and vivid personal meaning to the things that are most intimate with man, as, for example, in its creation of such haunting presences as Eros, Thanatos, Hypnos, Oneiros—Love, Death, Sleep, and Dream. For mythology is the sculpture of the imagination

10. But there are two special conceptions which the Greeks embodied in Nemesis and in the Erinyes, and in these they made a permanent contribution to the deeper thought of the world. So real is the feeling underlying the idea of Nemesis that the actual name has become a part of modern speech, and Nemesis has remained while Apollo and Zeus and the hosts of gods have disappeared. She played a great part in the national life of the Greeks, and was and still is the busiest of all divinities. She stands for that sudden disaster and eclipse which overtake human things. Even the Hebrews appear to have worshipped her,[1] and one of Jehovah's attributes was Nemesis.[2] One of the most striking facts in Greek history is that after the battle of Marathon (490 B.C.) Nemesis was more earnestly worshipped. For the Athenians believed that they had been made the instruments of the Persian overthrow. At Rhamnus in Attica they raised a great shrine to Nemesis, and only the most precious and most prized gifts were offered to her. Pausanias saw her temple, which was built of pure white marble, and it stood on a lonely road looking out to sea. Within it was a marble statue of the goddess by Phidias. Nemesis is the decline that follows growth, the defeat that comes

[1] "So I lifted up mine eyes the way toward the north, and behold northward at the gate of the altar this *Image of Jealousy* in the entry" (Ezek. viii. 5). Is this not Nemesis?

[2] "For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children" (Exod. xx. 5).

after victory, the ebb after the flow—in a word, that power of reaction, disillusion, and eclipse which even in his triumph haunts the spirit of man. She is the sense of loss and of warning. Hence it is really important to notice that as Greek national experience accumulated the worship of Nemesis grew until it became part of the religion of the State. In Homer and in Hesiod she is hardly even a goddess. She is simply the sense of shame, the blush of purity. Later she was identified with love and its sorrow, and then the sculptors gave her wings.[1] But throughout all her changes she remained the deep and sudden power, because she was ocean-born, daughter of Okeanos. At last she was elevated to national importance, and the Greeks vainly thought that she was keeping a special vigil over Greece. Her great festival, the Nemeseia, symbolised the solemnity of birth and of death, the giving and the withdrawing of the great gifts of life. For Nemesis is a form of the Eternal.

11. But in the figures of the Furies or Erinyes the Greeks embodied in even a more striking form those permanent moral forces with which mankind must reckon. At first the Erinyes, as the avenging goddesses, were conceived only as the angry ghosts of murdered men. They were the fiercest expression of that wild cry, "A life for a life!" which, as we heard, echoed through the law of Hindustan and of Babylon. The name of the Erinyes means "strife." They were the hounds of heaven for ever on the track of blood.[2] Yet their office was profoundly human. It was not merely the murdered man whom they avenged. He whose humanity was outraged, the beggar turned from the door, the suppliant driven from the mercy-seat, had each his

[1] Pausanias tells us (i. 33, 6) that the ancient images of Nemesis and the marble statue by Phidias at Rhamnus were wingless.

[2] *Eumenides*, 131, 132.

Erinys. Strangers and beggars are from Zeus,[1] says Homer, and an inhospitable act never went unpunished. Later, however, the function of the Furies became more august because universal. Both they and Nemesis are a sign of the nervousness of the Greeks, and of their sense of the precarious nature of all human things, and of the errors of life. In one aspect the Erinyes are greater even than the gods, and are independent of them, for they had separated themselves from the Olympian parade in order to keep a lonely watch over human wrong. They were worshipped in silence and at midnight. Honey was offered to them as a symbol for appeasement, and as a sign of their majesty their images were clothed in Phœnician purple. For they were the *lex talionis* of Destiny, or, in the words of Æschylus, they were the recording angels.[2]

12. The *Eumenides* of Æschylus had great political importance in its day, and it will serve to introduce us to the social condition of Athens during the brief period of her greatness. Its political motives have been variously interpreted, but it is now agreed that Æschylus was not opposed to the reform of 462 B.C., which deprived the Areopagus or council of elder statesmen of all political functions, but left to it the jurisdiction in criminal cases. The play portrays in a very vivid manner the transition from an age of wild justice to an age in which the State began to interfere in the blood feud. In early Greece vengeance was placed not in the hands of the State but of the citizen. It was considered to be not merely the right but the duty of the nearest kinsman of the murdered man to avenge the murder by a new crime. One murder engendered a whole series. Thus Agamemnon, in obedience to the infernal promptings of a deity and of a priest, offered up his daughter

[1] Iliad, ix. 502. [2] "Κακῶν τε μνήμονες σεμναὶ" (*Eumenides*, 359).

as he set out for Troy. Clytemnæstra, his wife, nursed during ten years her horror and despair, but when at last Agamemnon returned from Troy she slew him in his own palace. Now, however, the Erinys of Agamemnon began to goad Orestes to avenge his father's blood. Orestes, like another Hamlet, wavered; but at length, urged and maddened by Apollo, he murdered his own mother Clytemnæstra. But this wave of crime should not yet have been spent. The Erinys of Clytemnæstra was now awake and calling for vengeance upon Orestes, who should have been the victim of a new murderer; and so on in an unending series. Here in a few pages Æschylus brings before us the chaos of early society and its struggle towards law. That struggle was long past, and the Areopagus was already a venerable criminal court. As if to prove its divine right of jurisdiction, Æschylus makes Athena, the guardian of Athens, its founder. Orestes is summoned before it; and although the appeasement of the Furies at the acquittal of Orestes creates a certain sense of anticlimax, that appeasement marked a new era in the civilisation of Greece and of the world. For it meant that tribunals, however imperfect, had at last been created.

13. Very early in Greek history we become aware of that sense of politics and that genius for public life which are essentially European instincts. There was nothing like it in any contemporary State in Asia. In the sphere of politics as well as of art the Greeks were rapid creators. And just as Athenian potters had a horror of repeating the same pattern, so Athenian citizens were never weary of new political experiments. They shared in an intense form, although within very narrow and exclusive limits, that capacity for political co-operation which still distinguishes Europe from Asia. Borrowers of Oriental art, they were not, at least so far as their own civic system

and burgess rights were concerned, borrowers of Oriental politics. Even in the Homeric age the public assembly, whose existence, however, we noticed likewise in Hindustan, had been long established and was filled by freemen. Powerful kings like Agamemnon summoned and consulted it. In a very remarkable passage in the Iliad modern democratic ideas are foreshadowed and are expressed almost in modern language. Thus Diomedes rises during a debate and states that on a matter of policy he is about to contradict the king "where it is right to do so, even in the assembly."[1] And although it is a long way from the Homeric Agora to the Athenian Ecclesia, the one was the origin of the other. Public opinion, indeed, was first created in Greece. Babylon doubtless possessed an elaborate legal system. She had judges and even juries. But her juries were composed only of the city elders, who were appointed by the central authority. On the other hand, in Athens, during the period of her full democratic development, judges and juries were chosen not merely from the people but *by* the people, and by lot. Whereas, too, Asiatic decentralisation of government took the form of satrapies, which were only miniature tyrannies, in Greece decentralisation early assumed the form of self-governing cities and even of self-governing boroughs and parishes. Local government, in fact, is the keynote of Greek political history. For although in Greece political ideals suffered numerous and great oscillations, and although tyrannies were recurrent, civic freedom was the goal of Greek States. There is a velocity in almost everything Hellenic, and many of the cities overthrew their despots within a very short time. Athens had delivered herself about

[1] "*Ἀτρεΐδη, σοὶ πρῶτα μαχήσομαι ἀφραδέοντι,*
ᾗ θέμις ἐστί, ἄναξ, ἀγορῇ."
—*Iliad*, ix. 32, 33.

510 B.C. Even in Sparta, the most reactionary and bigoted of them all, the evils of a single despotism were neutralised by the creation of a dual monarchy—not in the sense that one king wore two crowns, but that two kings reigned over one people. In attempting, however, to understand the contribution which Greece made to the world's happiness and misery, it is only Athens among Greek states which we shall choose to study, because it was in Athenian life and in the Athenian conception of liberty that the strength and the weakness of Hellenic civilisation are best seen. In the rapid kaleidoscope of Greek history, the single prism which was Athens suffices to show the manifold lights and colours of the Hellenic ideal. Yet it is not the Athens of the despots that we shall select, not only because we know too little about her, but that because even if we knew more we should discover nothing really new concerning the relations between the oppressed and their oppressors. The fact which startles us is not that men were miserable under a despot but under a democracy. For although Athens did reach the most democratic form of government which the world has seen, the basis of her social system was still slavery. Hence we discover a new despotism, and the worst of all because it was collective. In discussing Athenian politics it is difficult to avoid the appearance of self-contradiction. But the contradiction lies originally in the system itself. European in its theory of political rights, it was still Asiatic in its theory of servile labour. The Athenian State in its democratic form was no doubt the result of the co-operation of its citizens in a great political task, but it was a co-operation directed against those who were excluded from the privileges of citizenship. In other words, the Athenian citizens were greatly outnumbered by their slaves. Moreover, co-operation between city

and city failed in the end, and was never long vital. The paradox of Greek, and especially of Athenian, politics is this: we are brought face to face with a democracy which, although the most vivid and intelligent in the world's history, was in reality a failure. It changed the tyranny of a single will into the tyranny of a multitude. A people whose political characteristics were an impatience of restraint and a horror of despots developed a collective, impersonal, and anonymous despotism which at length caused their own ruin.

14. There is evidence that the primitive Greeks, like all other Aryan communities, began their career not merely as clans, but as clans whose members shared common property. At least, the *land* belonged not to individuals but to groups of kinsmen, and could not be alienated. We have no means of knowing how early this communism was broken up, and at what date private property was established. But traces of the old system lingered in historical Greece. For the land was often described as belonging to ideal personages, to the gods and heroes as well as to tribes and brotherhoods. And even long after individual ownership had been established, the State continued to lay claim to fruit-trees, for instance, although they were growing in private gardens. At first allotments appear to have been held temporarily and on a precarious tenure, since at any moment the community might reassert its claim. In Greece, as in Rome, the gradual encroachment on the *ager publicus* was the result of long leases which had probably been assigned to certain families in return for distinguished services. Possession and the lapse of time were liable to render the usufruct perpetual, and hence the State's acquiescence was secured. This appears to be proved by the fact that in later times, as soon as the chief magistrate was elected, his first duty was to declare that he guaranteed to all owners their

proprietary rights. And since the chief magistrate was, during a long period, invariably chosen from the ranks of the aristocracy, the presumption is that the ruling families had created the custom in their own interests. In any case, the agrarian struggles of the seventh and the sixth centuries were carried on between a minority who attempted to maintain prescriptive territorial rights, and a majority who clamoured for a redistribution of the land. The social history of all European communities appears to have passed through three great phases: (1) the break-up of communism in land within communities which had grown too large for such a system to be any longer practicable; (2) the consequent rise of property and of an intense individualism; and (3) the inevitable war of rights. The early social and political condition of Attica is in its details unknown to us, but it seems evident that the growth of individualism was simultaneous with the centralising movement which gradually drew smaller communities within the orbit of the single powerful city, which was Athens. In that evolution religion had played an important part, for it had helped to reconcile political divergences in the common worship of Poseidon and Athena on the Athenian Acropolis. It has been supposed that there was some connection between the union of Attica and the fall of the monarchy, and that both events took place before the ninth century. We hear that a certain Codrus was the last king, and that he had laid down his life for his country. But it is very remarkable that the first check upon the royal authority took the form of the creation of a military commander-in-chief, or *polemarch*, who was elected by the nobles. Ought we not, in spite of the flattering legends about Codrus, to see in this fact a sign that some king had been convicted of military incapacity? If a hereditary ruler might thus become a danger to the State in time of

war, he might also by administrative incapacity be a danger in time of peace. In any case, the abolition of the kingship appears to have been the work of a powerful aristocracy, who thereupon elected an *archon* or regent from among themselves. At first he was regent for life, then for ten years, and at last only for one year. Thus, by successive descending steps, the Athenian constitution began to approach its democratic basis. And yet, although no people was so jealous of political power, the name of king was never abolished. An *archon* annually chosen was still called king, and although his duties were chiefly religious, the people saw in his person the continuity of the ancient State. Moreover, the aristocracy long remained omnipotent, because its members filled the office of the chief magistrates. But an aristocracy of wealth was gradually being created. The political history of Athens is the history of a people rapidly outgrowing their early political and economic system. The wine and the oil and the potter's clay of Attica did not long suffice as the basis of revenue, and Athens soon transformed herself into an industrial State. Yet, even in the more primitive period, when the people were attempting to eke out an existence by tilling a poor soil or tending cattle upon it, a division of labour had already been created. There are reasons for believing that that division was hereditary and fixed. Ancient writers like Herodotus, Plato, Plutarch, and Strabo expressly state that caste existed in Greece, and the doubts of modern historians appear to be unjustified.[1] We hear of four "tribes" named Teleontes or Geleontes, Hopletes, Ægicoreis, and Argadeis, and the most satisfactory explanation of these words is to be found in their translations, which are respectively

[1] "Blosse Hypothesen," says Busolt, regarding the theory according to which castes existed in early Greece (*Geschichte*, i. 392).

priests, warriors, herdsmen, and artisans. We are thus brought into contact with a system similar to that which we found in the Vedic age. There is no reason to show why it should not have arisen in Greece. On the contrary, it is well known that hereditary priesthoods were common. Besides, Herodotus informs us that caste existed in Sparta, and that a man could become a flute-player or a cook or a herald only if his father had followed the same profession.[1] It seems, therefore, to be only a waste of time to attempt to explain away a system traces of whose influence we rediscover in the social hierarchies of the later Athenian community. Thus another classification has come down to us, comprising the Eupatridai or nobles, the Georgoi or farmers, and the Demiurgoi or workmen. As in Hindustan, the nobles were originally the warriors, and their later privileges were the reward of their valour. The Georgoi and Demiurgoi may be taken as the representatives of the earlier herdsmen and handicraftsmen. That in this classification the priests are not mentioned may be taken as another proof of the fact that the Greeks, like the Romans, but unlike the Aryans of India, early disentangled priestly from political functions. The Eupatrids were the ruling class, but the two others took part in the assembly. Beneath all three were a kind of peasants or Hektemoroi, who, although freemen, had no political rights. They were attached to the soil, and were permitted to retain one-sixth of its produce. Hence their name. But there was still another classification of the people according to the amount of their property. It represents another stage in the transformation of a primitive State founded upon the clan system into a State founded upon an economic basis. Thus the upper Athenian class in the seventh

[1] VI. 60.

century consisted of those whose income reached the value of five hundred bushels of corn; the second class was made up of those whose incomes were less than five hundred but more than two hundred; and the third was formed by those whose incomes were not less than two hundred bushels. Beneath all those classes, again, were the *Thêtes*, who had either a small or no regular income, and their poverty excluded them from a share in the government. The later Athenian constitution was the result of the interaction of these various political forces, which indeed arrived very early at a deadlock. While an aristocracy based on birth had full control of the affairs of State, the aristocracy of money were already demanding a share of privileges. The introduction of coinage in place of the old system of barter revolutionised industry, and created an economic crisis which ruined the small dealers. War and sedition added to the confusion, and the want of a code of law, without which obligations and rights remained uncertain, placed the poor at the mercy of the rich. It was in these circumstances that about 621 B.C. Dracon was invited to draw up a code of civil and criminal law. But his achievement was hardly a reform. It only made the existing system articulate, and revealed its failure.

15. A social system probably in some of its phases as rigid and as sterile as the Brahmanism of Hindustan had produced in Attica the same results. The land was overwhelmed by debt, and a mortgage pillar stood upon every freehold. Moreover, by the law of Dracon, every debtor was the slave of his creditor until the debt was paid. Many freemen had thus lost their liberty, and the entire community was in danger of becoming the prey of a despot. For wealth was the only guarantee of liberty and the source of political power. It was precisely in such a condition of things that the tyrant's best chance

lay. Thus the history of Athens opens with a picture of economic misery which is in the strangest contrast with the splendour which she afterwards attained. Aristotle informs us that before Solon's day the State was governed by a few powerful families, and that the poorer class were "in absolute slavery to the rich."[1] We shall notice later the curious contradiction in the writings of some Greek philosophers, who, although they condemned the enslavement of freemen, regarded with indifference the forced labour of those whom they declared were not "by nature" free. Meantime, we are to understand that Aristotle is drawing a picture of the gradual subjection of Attic freemen. He lays his finger upon that cause of social trouble which is still active in modern States, for he ascribes the misery of the people to the fact that "the whole land was in the hands of a few persons."[2] He then gives a vivid description of the eviction and the enslavement of tenants unable to pay their rents. Their bodies were mortgaged for the liquidation of debt, and sometimes the tenant was compelled to sell not merely himself but his wife and children as slaves to his landlord. It was amidst this scene of universal squalor that Solon, a member of the aristocracy, appeared as "the champion of the people."[3] His great scheme of poor relief was called a Seisactheia, a sufficiently striking word because it means "the shaking off of burdens." His immediate task was to rescue the person of the debtor. It was now declared to be illegal to enslave a freeman for the non-payment of debt. But the reformer seems to have specially congratulated himself upon the fact that he had "liberated the land" as well, since he had overthrown the mortgage pillars which, standing on every

[1] "Athenian Constitution," 2.
[2] "*ἡ δὲ πᾶσα γῆ δι' ὀλίγων ἦν*" (ibid., 2).
[3] "*οὗτος δὲ* (*i.e.* Solon) *πρῶτος ἐγένετο τοῦ δήμου προστάτης*" (ibid., 2).

small holding, declared the name of the lender and the amount of the loan. Not content with having carried a law which cancelled debt, he passed another which altered the currency. The mina, which used to contain seventy-three drachmæ, was now declared to be equivalent to one hundred. This last measure had political and commercial as well as remedial motives behind it, because by the adoption of the Ionic currency Athenian trade was stimulated and new markets were opened up. Let us note, however, that Solon's great relief law was put in motion only on behalf of those freemen who had fallen into slavery because of their debts. Those who were "slaves by nature," as Aristotle would say, had no share in the brief Millennium. No doubt in one of his poems Solon praises himself because he had delivered those who "had crouched and trembled before their masters." But there is no sign that he had interfered with the slave traffic, which had already established itself as an organic element in the Athenian constitution. For instance, in his penalty for outrage only free women, not slave women, are mentioned. Thus, if the sufferings of the freemen had been great, we are to infer that those of the slaves must have been far greater. And, after all, Solon appears only to have transformed an old tribal State, in which the clan system was the basis, into a more flexible community. But the old tribes were retained, and indeed their retention prevented the new scheme from being a thorough reform. Such as it was, however, it made Solon the founder of the democracy. He restricted the amount of land which could be held by a single person. He not only gave the poor freemen a vote in the assembly, but he transferred the administration of justice to the people. In the form of the Heliæa, the citizens, without respect to their wealth, were chosen by lot to serve on the juries, and even the

poorest among them could impeach a magistrate. By the creation of an elected council of four hundred, which possessed the power of initiating legislation, the privileges of the Areopagus were curtailed. And the Areopagus itself was brought nearer the people by the fact that retiring magistrates entered it as permanent members.

16. The Solonian system was thus republican, but even within the life of its author it broke down in the war of factions and made way for a new "tyranny." The Athenians had first neutralised the royal prerogative by the appointment of a military commander, but now a successful *polemarch* or general, Pisistratus, like some diminutive Napoleon, seized the vacant throne. This happened in 561 B.C. Twice banished, but twice reinstated, Pisistratus succeeded in holding the "tyranny" for thirty-three years, and he bequeathed it to his sons. As we have seen, there is evidence that during those years Athens enjoyed prosperity, for Pisistratus encouraged industry and the arts. An aqueduct whose ruins have been discovered is believed to have been his work, and he built great temples. But although Aristotle gives a very favourable account of him, it is clear that Attica still suffered from economic stagnation. Aristotle narrates an incident which he apparently considered to be typical of the state of things. He says that Pisistratus had gone one day into the country, and that he passed a labourer who was digging a stony piece of ground. Pisistratus asked the man what sort of living he procured from such soil. "A harvest of aches and pains," replied the labourer, "and even out of *them* Pisistratus must get his tithe."[1] It is right to add that the benevolent despot granted the man exemption from the taxes; but the distress was widespread, and a revolution was in the air.

[1] "Athenian Constitution," 16.

17. Since the seizure of the supreme power by Pisistratus, the era of liberty had been only adjourned. In the reign of his son Hippias (528–510 B.C.) the movement became at last irresistible. But we should be wrong if we supposed that either Athenian or Roman liberty was the result of a spontaneous and united demand of the democracy. On the contrary, in both cases it was largely the result of the accidents of party strife. It was wrung out of the rivalries of factions which sought the popular vote. Personal quarrels, scandals, and prolonged hereditary hate between great families culminated about 510 B.C. in the overthrow of the Pisistratid dynasty. A genuine party of reform entered the scene, and it was led by Cleisthenes, a member of the house of the Alcmæonids. This great man took up, about 508 B.C., the legislative task where Solon had laid it down, and he purged the Solonian system of its obsolete elements. Politically and socially Athens was in chaos. And the struggle of the classes was made fiercer by the presence of many foreign residents. Pisistratus, by his encouragement of trade, had attracted many merchants to Athens, but these men were not citizens. We shall thus probably not be wrong if we suppose that Cleisthenes found at Athens a state of things not different from what existed at Johannesburg just before the Boer war. The franchise was in the hands only of the burghers, who belonged to the old exclusive clans. A new and industrious population, partly composed of foreign traders, had now grown up within the city, and were contributing the main share of its wealth. But they had no political rights. Cleisthenes became their spokesman, and in spite of much opposition actually succeeded in abolishing an antiquated system. In place of the four tribes he created ten political divisions of the people, and he allowed many foreigners to become

naturalised. Every parish began to manage its own affairs. A committee of the nation, numbering 500 members, were elected by the votes of the ten political divisions, and were accountable to the public assembly for their conduct of public business. This council has been described as a proper representative body, and as almost equivalent to a modern parliament. Public business was conducted by committees of fifty acting in rotation throughout the political year, which was divided for the purpose into ten parts. Although the poorest class of freemen appear still to have been excluded from the highest offices, the republican basis of the constitution had been broadened. Public appointments were made by lot, but this system had already existed in the time of Dracon.[1] To a modern reader the custom seems to be almost insane, but we must remember that it originated in the superstition that in the lot the decree of the gods became known. And it has been observed that, granted the democratic principles of a state like Athens whose citizens were not numerous, appointment by lot meant little more than office by rotation. Nevertheless, the system contained the causes of future ruin. Unconsciously it was condemned by the Athenians themselves. As if to prove that caution was not absent from their character, it was agreed that selection by lot was not to be applied in the case of military appointments. It was recognised that military genius could not be discovered by plunging for it among the mob. And it was well that the Athenian democracy at the outset of its career had made this provision, because when it was barely twenty years old it was called upon to meet the greatest trial which had as yet fallen upon Greece.

18. We are not immediately interested in the military affairs of Athens, but it is necessary to notice the effect

[1] *Aristoteles und Athen*, i. p. 89.

of the Persian wars upon her inner history. For it was owing to external menace that the next and most momentous stage in the development of her democracy was due. There is probably nothing more wonderful in the biography of nations than the fact that a people who, twenty years earlier, had been disunited and impotent in the hands of an incapable ruler, were now united and strong in face of the invaders. Twenty years of national life had created a national spirit. It was mainly upon Athens that the fury of Darius was to break. We mentioned that Greeks had early crossed the sea to become colonists in Asia Minor, and to serve as a link between both sides of the Ægean. We now see that they were a dangerous link. For it was because Athens had recognised them as her kinsmen and had sent them twenty ships in their revolt against Persia (498 B.C.) that her own punishment was being made ready. The Persians, who had destroyed Babylon and Egypt, and had pushed their way into Asia Minor and even across the Bosphorus into Scythia and Thrace, found in Athens the single barrier which shut them out from Europe. "Who are the Athenians?" asked Darius. And when he was told that they were a maritime people who had helped to kindle the flame of freedom among the Asiatic Greeks, he took his bow and shot an arrow into the sky, exclaiming, "Grant me, God, to revenge myself against the Athenians." And his servant was commanded to say to him frequently, and day after day, "Remember the Athenians!"

19. The great and dangerous task which lay before Athens may be measured by the fact that at the moment when all Asia was being put in motion against her, and when all Greece should have been united, most of the Greek States were ready to submit to the invader, and some of the Greek leaders actually became his pilots and

guides. When the day of crisis came Athens was left in the lurch even by Sparta, and only about one thousand other Greeks rallied to her at Marathon. Happily, however, the democracy had discovered a general in Miltiades, whose victory against the Persians at that battle sent a great thrill through Greece. As we saw, it was after that victory that the Temple of Nemesis was built within an hour's journey of the battlefield. Long afterwards the Marathonian plain was considered to be still holy ground, not only because heroes were buried in it, but because it was believed that their restless ghosts assembled every night for spectral combat, and even the neighing of the war-horses might be heard. "To go on purpose to see the sight," says Pausanias, "never brought good to any man, but with him who unwittingly lights upon it the spirits are not angry."[1] Such a legend shows how great was the impression which the battle had made on the imagination of Greece. But Marathon was only the first of a series of encounters which Athens was called upon to face during the next fifteen years. For Darius bequeathed his fury to his son Xerxes, who set out to conquer Greece in 481 B.C. But he learned at Thermopylæ, by the charge of the three hundred led by Leonidas, that on land these younger Aryans had greater 480 B.C.
courage than the elder; and he learned at Salamis that on the sea their superiority was far past questioning. It is right to remember that this collision between Persians and Greeks is one of the most striking events in human history, not merely because of its results, but because it was a collision between two peoples whose ancestors had once been in the closest contact. However we may explain the fact, a Greek, if he listened carefully, could understand many Persian words besides those for father, mother, grandson, ploughing, spinning, and weaving.

[1] I. 32, 3.

The Greek and Persian names for most of the weapons which were being used in the combat, such as spear, axe, javelin, bow and arrow, were fundamentally the same. Who can explain why half a continent now separated men who, if they were not descendants from the same primeval kindred, were certainly descendants of peoples who had once possessed a common language? Greeks and Persians possessed not only fragments of a common language, but of a common religion and of common institutions. Here we seem to catch a glimpse of the lost worlds which lie behind history, and we seem to see some great blood feud raging in prehistoric times and breaking races into fragments and scattering them between the continents. And what Erinys of history sleeping during unnumbered ages had suddenly awaked in order to bring these distant kinsmen into battle? The victory, which was a just one, was to remain with the European branch. For although Attica was beleaguered by sea and land, Athens sacked, and the tyrant of the whole East lodged on the Acropolis, the Athenians had again discovered their man in Themistocles, whose victory at Salamis destroyed the Persian navy. And here again it may be useful to note, for the comprehension of Greek character, that curious power of faith which, often irrespective of the moral quality of its object, makes men strong. The Athenians perhaps awaited the battle in the full belief that their sea god, Poseidon, was about to fight for them. For while the Persian fleet was moving towards the coasts of Attica the Greek sailors prayed to the winds to destroy it. And we are told that a great storm did actually blow from the Hellespont, and shattered half the ships of Xerxes. A vast treasure was sunk in the sea, and during many days the surf cast up on the eastern shores of Greece Persian gold and silver drinking-cups, costly accoutrements, and boxes filled with the

luxury of the East. The streets of Susa were not yet free from the reek of the incense which had gone up in honour of the massacre at Thermopylæ and of Xerxes' victories in Attica. But now Persian horsemen, riding, as Herodotus says, never so fast, arrived in Asia with the news of what Athens had done.

20. Such great victories made the democracy conscious of its strength, and gave it, besides, the headship of all Greece. In the wild crisis now past, it was only Athens among Greek States that had been united, for her rank and her rabble had shared the common danger. Æschylus had fought at Marathon and at Salamis. Even the members of the Areopagus had found themselves fighting side by side with the common people. Aristotle distinctly tells us that at Salamis the entire multitude became sailors.[1] In other words, it needed the national peril to create the national ideal. And this brings us to the third and most important stage in the history of Athenian democracy. The leaders of the new movement were Ephialtes and Pericles, but especially Pericles, whose ascendency dates from about 450 B.C. It was his task to regulate the unsteady pulse of a people whose heads had been somewhat turned by success. For they had saved Greece. They had done more: they had saved Rome. If Xerxes had won the victory of Salamis, his next movement would have been westwards, because it was Europe he had set out to conquer.[2] Thus he would have doubtless entered the Italic peninsula, and would have strangled infant Rome, and Europe would have become an Asiatic province. The Athenians lost no time in recognising their own importance. Success seems actually to have unhinged the minds of leaders like Miltiades and Themistocles, and a contagion of arrogance began to spread among the people. They demanded

[1] "Politics," V. ch. iv.

[2] Herodotus, vii. 8.

not merely self-government, but a share in the State's revenue. Or at least Pericles, anxious to conciliate them, became the author of a scheme which presents communistic features. In judging that scheme, however, we must not forget the national upheaval which lay behind it. Since in the recent crisis *all* the citizens had served the State, was it not just to make them partakers in the State's revenue?[1] The levelling movement began in earnest. It was not merely that the Areopagus, a kind of House of Lords, was denuded of its power, but that all the great offices of State, which belonged theoretically only to the highest classes, were now thrown open to the poorest citizens. In other words, those who had had no genuine political experience became politically powerful. A salary was attached to all the offices, and, on the proposal of Pericles—who, it appears, had got the idea from others—the judges in the popular courts received a daily fee of two obols. Later, about 425 B.C., it was raised to three obols, and afterwards the people were even paid a drachma, or about tenpence, for attending the assembly. The entire responsibility for the origin of this system has been fixed upon Pericles, who, in the epigram of the day, made the people presents out of their own property. Aristotle charges him with having been an "anti-demagogue," that is to say, the rival of other demagogues whom he succeeded in outbidding.[2] So far, however, as the dicasts' fees were concerned, the proposal appears to have been inevitable. For at any moment a man was liable to be summoned by lot to the courts, where he was compelled to sit day after day hearing cases while his own work was being neglected. The temptation was, therefore, to abandon honest work in order to make

[1] According to Aristophanes (*Vesp.*, 655 *sqq.*), the democracy was cheated after all.

[2] "*ἀντιδημαγωγῶν πρὸς τὴν* Κίμωνος *εὐπορίαν*" (*Ath. Const.*, 27).

a living out of the law courts. Many succumbed to it, and waited eagerly in the hope that the lot might fall upon them, for the fee was equivalent to a day's rations. It was nothing less than a windfall for idle people. It became the main support of many families, and therefore the industrious habits of the people were seriously injured. This is the system ridiculed by Aristophanes, who, in one of his comedies, makes a boy ask his father how they can procure breakfast unless the court is held.[1] But such a scheme was also responsible for frequent miscarriage of justice. The decisions in civil suits were not seldom the result of the political bias or the ignorance of the judges. Difficult matters were brought before untrained minds; and when we remember that the judgments of these "popular" courts were final, since there was no higher tribunal, we can see how rickety was the basis upon which Athenian justice rested. The Athenian constitution is described as a democracy. The truth is that it was State Socialism, and its failure is of the utmost historical importance. In some respects it was self-government gone mad. The lot decided who were to be the successful candidates for public office, and indeed the entire State became a lottery. Only the military commander, the superintendents of public wells, and the commissioners for festivals were elected on their merits, and hence the fortunes of the State might any moment fall into the keeping of men picked from the mob. It is no wonder that from now onwards till the end of her brief history Athens was vibrating with intense emotion. By the help of a few great men she was now the greatest power in Greece. She became

[1] "*ἄγε νυν, ὦ πάτερ, ἢν μὴ*
τὸ δικαστήριον ἄρχων
καθίσῃ νῦν, πόθεν ὠνη—
σόμεθ' ἄριστον;"

—*Vesp.*, 304 *sqq.*

suddenly rich. Her achievement was at last rewarded by the homage of the other Greek States, which had been content to be spectators while the invader was being met and driven back. They now feared her, confessed their impotence, and made the mistake of paying her to fight for them. She used part of their tribute for her own adornment. The years of her greatness were not an hundred, but in less than half of that time she turned her hegemony into dominion.

21. It was only gradually, and by the help of great men like Themistocles, that the Athenians came to understand that their real destiny, like the destiny of Britain, was on the sea. The Acropolis was about five miles from the shore, and it was not until the old town was linked by long walls with the Piræus that Athens really became (458 B.C.) a maritime city. But there is evidence that her clearest minds regretted the entanglement with the continent. In one of his speeches Pericles reminded the Athenians of what sea-power could do for a people, and then he added, "Imagine that we were islanders; can you conceive a more impregnable position?"[1] And Xenophon said that Athens lacked only one thing: she should have been an island.[2] As it was, however, she became the mother of the finest Greek seamen, and if her sons were athletes on the land they were also athletes on the sea. According to Xenophon, they proved that they were born sailors whenever they stepped into a boat. Athens needed action, and her history is all mobile. When she at last knew the sea, she felt the contagion of its restlessness, and heard its whisper of great undertakings. It made her familiar with danger, and all its hazard entered into her history. Moreover, it became the high-road of her wealth. Xenophon tells us that after the Persian wars, when the Piræus

[1] Thuc., i. 143.

[2] "Polity of the Athenians," ii. 14.

was the busiest port in Greece, even the lodging-house keepers began to make more money. Merchants flocked to her market, and her docks became crowded with ships. Like modern England, she depended on southern Russia for large quantities of grain. An Athenian functionary was stationed at the Bosphorus to control the export of cereals, and another functionary at the Piræus to control the import. In order to keep the prices low and to lay a check on the monopolists, Pericles built a great magazine to hold grain, which the State sold almost at cost price or distributed gratis at a crisis. He reminded his countrymen that they drew the produce of the whole world into their harbour. Although there was a revenue from imported goods, Pericles used the language of Free Trade. "We throw open our city," he said, "to the world, and never by alien acts exclude foreigners."[1] And yet when she chose, Athens could blockade the coasts of Greece. The carrying trade of the eastern Mediterranean was now chiefly in her hands, for after the defeat of Persia Phœnician trade rapidly declined. The wool, the silk, the fruits and spices of the East were shipped to the Piræus, and were laid out in the Athenian market with the products of Sicily and the West.

22. It was the policy of Pericles to make Athens great not merely in commerce but in religion and in art, and he appears actually to have realised certain of the views which Plato expressed later in his Ideal Republic. Both Pericles and Plato maintained that a people should live "in a land of health amid fair sights and sounds."[2] Whereas, however, Plato appears to have looked with suspicion on the arts, since he banished the poets from his imaginary state, Pericles invited the co-operation of the talent and genius of the day in order to transform Athens into the metropolis of a great maritime empire.

[1] Thuc., ii. 39.

[2] "Republic," iii. 401.

The old town was devoid of plan, and contained narrow and irregular streets. Some of the thoroughfares were less than fifteen feet wide. The majority of the houses were little better than flat-roofed huts of wood or mud or sun-dried brick. Pericles, therefore, commissioned Hippodamus, an Asiatic Greek, who had studied Babylonian mathematics and had become a master of Ionic architecture, to design a city near the sea. The Piræus became a new Athens with broader streets and handsome quays. But Greek towns were not large, and Greece produced nothing like Babylon. The country was always easy of access, and its air was felt within the town walls. Even when Athens became crowded, and overcrowded, and a city of fashion, we may be sure that it was not in the streets that the runners practised for the national games. The city, however, possessed three great gymnasia for the athletes. But since Athenians loved to take the air, roofed galleries and colonnades were built in which the citizens might meet while sheltered from the sun and rain. Attica was rich in the best kinds of stone, and the Athenian quarries are still actually in use. Hard limestone from the Piræus was chosen for the foundations of all the famous buildings. Marble came from Paros, Naxos, and Pentelicus, and the more diaphanous kinds were cut into thin tiles with which windowless buildings like the Parthenon were roofed, so that the sun shone through. It was upon the Acropolis that the greatest expense was lavished. The Athenians, burning to efface the sign of the Persian occupation, rebuilt the temples and the entire city in so short a time and on so magnificent a scale that Plutarch in his Life of Pericles tells us that the sight was an astonishment to all beholders. The masts of Persian ships captured at Salamis are said to have been used in the architec-

tural scheme of the Odeon or concert hall, "the most beautiful in the world," in which the people assembled to hear the best music of the day. In a portico in the market-place Pausanias, who visited Athens in the second century A.D., saw the great picture of the battle of Marathon. At one point "all the men of Attica are closing with the barbarians," and at another the enemy is seen fleeing to the Phœnician ships.[1] Athens thus became a museum of great memories. In the theatre Pausanias noticed statues of Euripides, Sophocles, and Æschylus, whose plays had been written for the democracy. But the city was crowded with images of the gods as well as with those of great men. There was the temple of Green Demeter, and there were altars in the market-place to Pity, Modesty, Impulse, and "The Voice from Heaven."[2] Every phase of the vivid Greek temperament—its passion, its purity, even its excitement—appears to have received sculptural expression. In the altar to Impulse we see the hurry and heat and eagerness of the Greeks, and in the temple to Reverence or Modesty we are reminded of the beautiful legend that Modesty was the nurse of Athena. It was on Athena that money was most lavished, because she was the titular goddess. Callimachus made her a golden lamp. From the Acropolis she dominated the city's life, and indeed all Attica. It was not merely that within her temple, the Parthenon, which became the national bank and treasure-house, Phidias raised her statue of ivory and gold. Another statue, also by Phidias and made from the bronze weapons captured at Marathon, was erected in the open air on the summit of the Acropolis. The gleaming helmet was seen far off at sea, so that the statue became a beacon for home-coming ships. Since Pericles desired to make Athens the religious as well as the commercial

[1] I. 15, 4.

[2] "Φήμης βωμὸς" (ibid., i. 17).

centre of the empire, it was thus necessary to spend enormous sums on the gods. And when we remember that temples and statues were raised to Zeus and Poseidon and Nemesis, and to many other divinities, we see that Athens had embarked upon a career of splendour and extravagance. There was a myth that in the gardens of Adonis there was hardly a difference between blossom and fruit, but that both burst forth simultaneously. In a certain sense it is a picture of Athens. For she displayed the same hurry of ripening as if conscious of the brevity of her glory. The other Greek States acted upon her like a drag. Not one of them understood her raging energy. Although, since they too were Aryan States, they possessed courage, none of them had her audacity. Those which lay landward behind her and at her side in the Peloponnese remained somewhat somnolent, uncouth, and dull, and looked on with a frown at her great parade. For Athens was only the façade of Greece.

23. But now a strange paradox awaits us when we attempt to examine the social foundations of this ambitious democracy. No people were ever so jealous of their freedom, and it had cost them centuries of labour and even of bloodshed to win it. Nevertheless, they created a Free State which was also a Slave State. After they had secured their own rights they engaged in a vast and lucrative tyranny. For this gleaming city was one of the great slave-markets of the ancient world. She passed special laws for the protection of slave-dealers, upon whose prosperity part of her revenue depended. A tax was levied on the sale of slaves, and the oftener a human being changed hands the better for the State. Her slave merchants carried on business both wholesale and retail. During war they were allowed to follow the armies, and were afforded special facilities for purchasing

prisoners and for importing or exporting them. Owing to her position as a naval power, Athens enjoyed a monopoly in this merchandise of the human body, and her ships, laden with the human freight, kept plying between such slave centres as Chios, Samos, Cyprus, and Tyre. In the market a special place was reserved for the exhibition of the slaves, who were arranged in ranks upon a raised platform, and were counted, as in Babylon, by the head. They were referred to in the slang of the market as "bodies" (*σώματα*). Like cattle they were examined by experts, who subjected them to a rough public diagnosis. Gathered from the ends of the earth to await new masters, they were found talking all languages, known and unknown. And there was a curious custom in accordance with which those who had been brought by ship had their feet covered with whitewash as a sign that they had traversed the foam of the sea. The Athenian character was essentially cosmopolitan, and its love of all that was new and strange was strikingly illustrated in the international character of the slaves. In the Delphic inscriptions the names indicate that their bearers had been brought even from the heart of Asia, from the shores of the Persian Gulf, from Phrygia, Lydia, Cappadocia, Syria, Judæa, Arabia, Egypt, Thessaly, Thrace, the coasts of the Black Sea, and even Rome. Their gross value has been reckoned in millions, and, according to Aristotle, the most necessary and valuable property is man.[1] He says that there are two kinds of property—animate and inanimate—and he defines a slave as a "living property."[2] In the Athenian market that particular kind of property was for sale by auction or

[1] "Economics," Bk. I. ch. v.

[2] "Καὶ ὁ δοῦλος κτῆμα τι ἔμψυχον" (*Politics*, i. 4). In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, where Aristotle defines slaves as "living implements," ὄργανα ἔμψυχα, he adds (viii. 11) that an implement is inferior to a slave only because it is not alive.

by private bargain. The traffic in slaves increased as Hellenic civilisation grew more complex and luxurious. At first only the consequence, it became later the cause of war, and neither age nor sex, neither community of race or of religion, protected the captive. There was, indeed, a sort of unwritten law that Greeks should never enslave Greeks; but it was frequently violated, and, as we shall see, at the break-up of Greece during her fratricidal war a furious desire to enslave each other took possession of the entire race.

24. A remarkable trait in later Greek character was a horror of mechanical work.[1] Any action which contorted the body of a freeman was condemned. It was out of this feeling that there sprang a legend according to which Athena threw away even the flute in disgust because it distorted the lips and the countenance of those who played it. It is distinctly declared by Aristotle that no free citizen should be allowed to engage in mechanical labour, because it is ignoble. Those only, he says, are slaves whose bodies Nature has fitted for that purpose, and he quotes with approval the harsh Greek proverb, "Leisure is not for slaves."[2] Similarly, Spartan law forbade freemen to engage in any work, because it was degrading.[3] Now, although slavery was already established in the Homeric age, no such doctrine had as yet settled into Greek minds. On the contrary, the humblest services were considered to be no disgrace to princely persons or even to the gods. Paris was a shepherd; Andromache fed the horses of Hector with her own hands; Achilles

[1] Polybius (vi. 42) contrasts the early Roman love of thorough work with Greek idleness.

[2] "οὐ σχολὴ δούλοις" (*Politics*, iv. 15). Mauri (p. 70) attempts to prove that the opinions of Aristotle and Plato on mechanical labour were not shared by the majority of the Athenians.

[3] Plutarch, *Lycurgus*, 16.

carved at table; and Nausicaa, a king's daughter, went down to the brook to wash linen. So far from labour being a stigma, both Homer and Hesiod are never weary of praising it. In fact, Hesiod declares roundly that the immortal gods abhor idlers. No doubt in Homer the master has already the power of life or death over the slave, but an organised slave-trade was as yet carried on only by the Phœnicians. Moreover, there was no great gulf fixed between master and servant in the early age. The handworker was still a freeman. A community not yet emerged from the pastoral stage was naturally drawn closely together; and since, for instance, a herdsman was, owing to the attacks by bandits, exposed to danger, the profession of shepherd was still considered to be fit for a gentleman. When the raider did arrive, he had no respect for rank, but carried off kings and queens, princes and princesses. Hekabe, Cassandra, and Andromache all became slaves, and Achilles sold to a king the son of a king. Indeed, this menace of slavery, which was never absent from Greek life, must have added a strange excitement to it. Even in the later age freedom was guaranteed to no man, and we hear that Plato was once enslaved and then ransomed for about one hundred pounds. But between the age of Homer and of Plato the Greek view of life had undergone a profound change. For while freemen had decreased slaves had increased. And it is remarkable that whereas the Greek word for "foreigner," which was "barbarian," does not occur in Homer, in Aristotle it is used with some contempt, and is practically synonymous with "slave." We trace, indeed, very clearly the growth of a certain jingoism in the Greek mind, and Aristotle is full of it. For instance, he quotes with approval the saying of a poet that when a foreigner becomes the slave of a Greek, that is only as it should be. Such a passage is a revelation of all that

had been taking place between the Homeric and the Aristotelian age, and it is, besides, a key to one of the causes of the ruin of Greece. For these words imply the gradual evolution of a free agricultural community into an industrial tyranny. Whereas Homer had said pathetically, "Zeus takes away half the manhood of a man when slavery overtakes him,"[1] Aristotle, analysing human society at his leisure, calmly concludes that slavery is a law of nature which is advantageous and just.[2] And when we find even Socrates endorsing the theory that it is just to enslave one's enemies,[3] we begin to see that this vast forfeit of liberty had begun to be considered as a necessary element, and, indeed, as the basis of Athenian civilisation.

25. The Greek slave no more than the Babylonian was considered as a "person." We shall see later that he did receive some protection from the law, but the general view of his social position is expressed in Aristotle's statement that the slave is not merely the servant of his master but wholly the master's property. For that being, says Aristotle, who although human does not belong to himself, is by nature a slave (*φύσει δοῦλος*). It is perfectly likely, however, that at Athens as elsewhere the lot of the domestic was, on the whole, happier than that of the industrial slave or than that of the servile labourer in the fields. Aristotle, for instance, possessed thirteen slaves, and there is every reason to believe that he treated them with that moderation which he commends to others. In his will he provided for the liberation of five of them, and bequeathed the remaining eight as presents to his friends. In his *Economics* he advises all masters to promise ultimate emancipation to their slaves.

[1] Odyssey, xvii. 322.

[2] "Politics," i. 5.

[3] "*τὸ ἀνδραποδίζεσθαι τοὺς μὲν φίλους ἄδικον εἶναι δοκεῖ, τοὺς δὲ πολεμίους δίκαιον*" (Xenophon, *Mem.* ii. 2, par. 2).

And although the motive he adduces is not humane but merely one of policy, since he says that the bait of freedom will cause the slave to work harder,[1] still, the fact remains that domestic slaves enjoyed a prospect of liberty which was denied to the chained gangs who laboured in the workshops and in the mines. The domestic slave must have been better cared for and more decently dressed. For as luxury increased, a man's social standing began to be measured by the number of slaves whom he could afford to keep. Not to possess a slave was a sign of poverty, but to possess three or more was a sign of wealth, and often became an occasion for vanity and display. But we shall probably never know the real proportion of freemen to slaves at Athens. Much controversy has gathered round the statement of Athenæus that the slaves numbered at one time 400,000, whereas there were only 21,000 adult male citizens. Hume, in his remarkable essay on the "Populousness of Ancient Nations," says that the number of the slaves in Athens should not be reckoned as more than 40,000.[2] But some later investigators have seen little reason for accepting this opinion. Boeckh, for instance, examined the problem very thoroughly, and came to the conclusion that the ratio of freemen to slaves was about 1 : 4. The number of slaves cannot, he thought, have been less than 365,000. On the other hand, these and similar calculations based on the statements of Athenæus have been re-examined since Hume's essay was written, and have been once more rejected. It has been pointed out, for instance, that other places in Greece, such as Corinth and Ægina, could never have contained the number of slaves which Athenæus assigns to them, and the presumption is that if he was wrong in two cases he was also wrong in the

[1] Econ., Bk. I. 5.
[2] Essays, vol. i. p. 419; ed. Green and Grose, 1875.

third. It has even been supposed that in the time of Pericles the entire population of Athens, including the Piræus, cannot have exceeded 150,000, and of those some thirty or forty thousand were freemen. This calculation is based on the supposition that about 430 B.C. the total census of Attica numbered only 235,000 persons, including 100,000 slaves. But these figures are probably far too low. We hear of a single citizen who owned as many as 1000 slaves whom he employed in the mines, and of another who owned 600. The father of Demosthenes kept fifty-two, and we know that some philosophers had as many as ten. In any case, all writers are agreed that the citizens were vastly outnumbered. There is no reason for believing that in Attica the disproportion was less than in Sparta. Now, from a passage in Herodotus, who mentions the number of helots present at the battle of Platæa, it has been calculated that the number of helots in Sparta must have been at least 220,000. And when we are told by Thucydides that on one occasion as many as 20,000 Attic slaves, "the majority of whom were artisans,"[1] escaped, we are forced to conclude that Attica contained a dense servile population.

26. It was found to be cheaper to buy slaves than to breed them, and marriage was seldom encouraged. And yet many slaves must have been born on Attic soil, because there were special names for those who were reared in the household. Especially in the country, where living was cheaper than in the town, the breeding of slaves was doubtless found to be profitable, although it is true that Xenophon does not commend the practice. But whether reared at home or brought from abroad, slaves became so numerous that free labour was ruined.

[1] Thuc., vii. 27.

The gradual destitution of skilled freemen, who were unable to face the competition of the vast market of cheap servile labour, formed one of the acute social problems at Athens. By its encouragement of the servile system, the State was guilty of creating a numerous class of unemployed freemen, who were at last compelled to join the ranks of the slaves. The day was when bakers, carpenters, shoemakers, and spinners were all freemen, but the day came when they found slaves as their rivals in these various trades.[1] Not, indeed, that slave bakers, slave carpenters, slave shoemakers received wages. In Athens, as in Babylon, the wages were paid to the slave-owner, who hired out his men as he hired out his beasts of burden. We even hear of physicians as slaves. In fact, almost the entire industrial activity of the State was carried on by the servile population, whose masters were only overseers drawing incomes from the involuntary labour of those who were their captives. Weaving, tanning, cutler work, milling, building, dyeing, flute-making, lace-making, carriage-building, and armoury were all carried on by the slaves. In those days strikes took the form of a general stampede, which, however, owing to the rigid discipline, only rarely happened. But if escape were at all possible there was no motive to remain, since no wage was earned. Aristotle, who appears to have been fascinated by the problem of slavery since he recurs to it so often, points out that the customary "reward of a slave is his food."[2]

27. Athenian society thus presented an extraordinary

[1] Beloch (*Die Attische Politik seit Perikles*, p. 7, *n.*) says that it is a "childish view" to suppose that at Athens all mechanical labour was performed by slaves. Nevertheless, in his work on the population of Greece and Rome he states (pp. 504 *sqq.*) that slave labour ruined the free mechanic and drove him from the market. An excellent account of the destruction of free labour at Athens is to be found in Mauri's *I Cittadini Lavoratori dell' Attica*, pp. 83 *sqq.*

[2] Econ., i. 5.

spectacle. It was based upon a system of kidnapping and pressgang. If a citizen took a walk into the country he saw agricultural labourers working chained in the fields.[1] If he went into a friend's garden he found that the gardener was a slave, and probably a Persian, because the Athenians, who were lovers of gardens, preferred the Oriental methods of horticulture, which at that period were famous. If, again, our Athenian returned to Athens to call upon another friend, he was admitted by a slave porter. If, finally, the visitor were invited to dinner, he would be attended by perfumed slaves. For the Athenians, who chose for their personal attendants the handsomest slaves, had begun to convert them into instruments of luxury. The growth of ostentation is well marked in the catalogues of names of domestic slaves which Athenæus has handed down.[2] A wealthy house contained a hierarchy of sycophants. In fact, whereas all citizens were equal, it was among the slaves that the various grades of superiority were most clearly seen, and probably felt, from the rude muscular drudge, toiling day and night in the mines, to the supple and elegant minister of domestic luxury and vice. The great increase of Athenian wealth was unaccompanied by the technical education of the governing class. For that class was interested only in the finer forms of culture. War, politics, athletics, philosophy, and, in a more restricted sense, music,[3] were the proper occu-

[1] Xenophon, Econ., iii. 4. In the passage in question, however, Socrates points out that those slaves who were not shackled worked far better, and he recommends more liberty on grounds of good husbandry.

[2] Deip., 93. Thus we have "the waiting man," "the assistant," "the attendant," "the man who walks before," "the confidential servant," "the drudge," &c.

[3] On the question whether music should or should not form part of a gentleman's education, see the curious discussion in Aristotle's "Politics," VII. ch. vi. It was still considered doubtful whether a musician was not a "buffoon." Ibid., ch. v.

pations of a gentleman. An unproductive minority were the spectators of the compulsory labour of thousands of slaves. That the outbreaks were fewer than might have been expected is probably due to the fact that the slave-owners acted upon the cruel advice of writers like Plato and Aristotle, who pointed out that, to avoid conspiracy, slaves speaking the same language should not be allowed to work together.[1] The real capital of Athenian society was thus *living* capital in the shape of human muscles, and this vast loan of labour was not borrowed but seized, and no interest was paid. Moreover, it was a form of capital which, once destroyed, was easily replaced. A handful of men were governing a nation in chains. History is often, no doubt, a record of social outbursts; but, after all, its main theme is the eternal patience of Humanity.

28. Some writers suppose that because the household slaves were allowed to take part in the worship of the household gods their position in the family cannot have been very degraded. But this fact is probably only the Greek equivalent of that astute modern view which sees in religion a kind of police. And, indeed, it is not unlikely that the myths concerning the slavery of such gods as Poseidon and Apollo may have been invented by some cunning mind which felt the need of a religious sanction for tyranny. In the same way the consolations of Christianity are offered by wealthy Christians to the modern poor. But what is really remarkable in connection with the religious education of Greek slaves is that their god was Cronus, a god who had been dethroned, who had lost his rights, and, according to the vain belief of the slaves, was one day to recover them.

[1] Plato, "Laws," vi. 777; Aristotle, Econ., i. 5.

For they, too, must often have been dreaming of their dethroned rights. There is one other curious contradiction in Greek religious character which deserves to be mentioned, because it indicates a kind of snobbery. Whereas it was customary to extol the divine hero Hercules, the eternal labourer, it was no less usual to despise his humble working representative, the human slave.

29. When a new slave arrived in a Greek household he was made to sit upon the hearth like a suppliant. Then the mistress of the house sprinkled certain dried fruits upon his head, and muttered prayers for the success of the new purchase. This initiation, however, did not involve membership of the family, but was only a sign that new human property had been acquired. There is evidence that even the ordinary household slave was sometimes treated more or less like an enemy. When, for instance, he was engaged in baking for the household an iron collar was fastened round his throat in such a way that it was impossible for him to eat any morsel of the bread he had baked.[1] The master legally possessed full rights of punishment, and made use of various instruments of torture. There was a whole workshop of ingenious tools for punishing lazy or disobedient slaves. Thus we hear of the lash, the rack, the wheel, and of special instruments for dislocating the limbs.[2] There was only one asylum for a slave who fled from these miseries—the temple of a god. But although he was inviolate as soon as he had entered its precincts, ingenious stratagems were invented to evade the law. It is profoundly significant that it was often to the temple of the Furies that the fugitive ran, as if to make one last appeal to those guardians of outraged

[1] Pollux (vii. 20) in Büchsenschütz, p. 159.
[2] Wallon, vol. i. p. 310.

humanity. But the runaway was often allowed to starve to death at the altars, or the priest was bribed to deliver him. Or else the slave, maddened by hunger, dashed out of the temple, and was immediately recaptured by his pursuers, who had been lying in wait. It was not difficult to recognise an escaped slave, because his brow was branded. If, indeed, he had contrived to place upon his head the garland sacred to a god—for instance, the laurel of Apollo—he was again inviolate. Yet we hear that that symbol, so charged with human emotion, was often plucked from his brow, and thus by casuistry and by a fiction the pursuer's hand was again legally laid upon the fugitive. In a small city like Athens, or even in the country lanes of Attica, there was little chance of escape. And that chance was further diminished in later Greece, because there was actually instituted a system of insurance against runaways. A certain Antimenes of Rhodes founded an insurance agency whereby masters who paid a yearly subscription of eight drachmæ, or about seven shillings, received the value of the fugitive slave if his capture had become impossible. We are told that Antimenes made a fortune.[1] Again, although the Greek States were seldom at peace with each other, they were united in the suppression of their slaves. Athens once sent a large body of troops to support the Spartans in putting down a rebellion of helots.[2] For it was not only Athens that possessed slaves. Every Greek State had converted itself into a cage for those "tame animals," as Aristotle calls them.[3] But sometimes they grew wild and terrorised their keepers.

30. In Athens, as in Babylon, the slave's best chance of tolerable treatment lay in his market value. For a costly slave, like a good horse, was worth care. In

[1] Aristotle, Econ., ii. 35. [2] Thuc., i. 102.
[3] Or at least he classes them with tame animals (*Politics*, i. 5).

the age of Demosthenes an educated slave was, indeed, not worth more than a well-bred horse, *i.e.* about fifty pounds. But an average hack cost only about three minæ, or a little over twelve pounds, whereas an average slave cost far less. Xenophon considered eight pounds a very fair price for a labourer, but he points out that other slaves were not worth even two pounds, or half a mina. The price, of course, varied according to age, health and vigour, personal attractions and attainments. According to Plutarch, Alcibiades once gave the sum of seventy minæ, or not much less than three hundred pounds, for a dog, but it was rarely that a human being was sold for so great a sum. The slaves of luxury were, of course, more expensive, but an ordinary mechanic was to be had easily for less than four pounds sterling.[1] For a slave who possessed any special accomplishments, twenty pounds appears to have been a usual price. On the other hand, cooks and flute-players were to be had at ninepence per day.[2] A singer was once sold for five pounds, and a schoolmaster or grammarian for about seventeen. When Alexander the Great captured Thebes he sold 30,000 of the inhabitants into slavery, and he received about £3, 3s. per head.

31. Unlike Sparta, the Athenian State, although it owned public slaves, was not the immediate proprietor of a great servile population. Nevertheless, Athens was the indirect employer of a large amount of servile labour. The famous silver mines of Laurion, situated in the extreme southern promontory of Sunium, became the chief source of Athenian revenue, and the miners were slaves. The district was, and still is, the most arid

[1] Boeckh (p. 86) mentions 100 drachmæ as the average price of a miner.

[2] The price of a flute-player, however, was often as high as twenty minæ. *Cf.* Richter, p. 106.

and desolate in Attica, and, save for two small springs, is waterless. Agriculture does not exist, because the soil is a deposit of marble, mica, limestone, and slate. Before mining operations had begun the surrounding heights were deeply wooded, but the trees were cut down for fuel to feed the furnaces, and as early as the fourth century B.C. wood was being imported. To-day only a few pine-trees remain, and it is rare if the cyclamen, the violet, and the wild thyme spring out of the rocky soil and relieve the monotony of the landscape. In the age of the Athenian splendour, however, Laurion played a very important part, and it is well to remember that behind the great display of Athenian art a stern and in many respects a tragic industrial system was creating the means without which that art would never have existed. The heaps of ancient slag and scoriæ and the remains of furnaces and workshops which have been discovered at Laurion by modern excavators bring us face to face with the actual methods of Attic industry, and bear witness to an immense activity. And it is singular to think that the same soil is still producing its metal, and that two modern mining companies extract annually about ten thousand tons of lead. The silver appears to have been exhausted by the Athenians, but Laurion contains also lead, zinc, and even iron. Many of the actual tools with which the Athenian slaves worked have been discovered in the mines—iron hammers, chisels with bent edges where the blows had been struck, shovels, pickaxes, and spades.[1] With those paltry implements the slave was compelled to fight his way through the hard rock, slowly creating galleries as he went. Many of these galleries begin at a depth of

[1] Ardaillon, pp. 21 *sqq.*

150 feet, and are often only large enough to admit the human body. The fact that labour was necessarily slow, and that nevertheless the annual return of silver was large, implies that great numbers of slaves must have been employed. Some writers have been content with an estimate of ten thousand workmen. But those who have visited the mines believe that that number should be at least doubled. A single capitalist, one Sosias of Thrace, employed one thousand slaves who had been leased to him by another capitalist, Nicias. Moreover, the yearly wastage among the slaves was so great that many thousands must have passed through the hands of the overseers.

32. The fact that more than two thousand shafts have been discovered indicates the wide extent of the operations. Some of those shafts reach a depth of 400 feet, and in the perpendicular walls there have been noticed niches where the ladders once rested. Ancient writers mention that the air below was very foul, and yet a rude system of ventilation had been devised, because mention is made of air-shafts (ψυχαγώγια). It is difficult to believe, however, that the hygienic and sanitary conditions were even tolerable. Plutarch, for example, makes Nicias responsible for the death of numberless miners. Some interesting calculations have been made with a view to discovering the duration of the day's labour. Many of the clay lamps used by the miners have been found, and, according to certain experiments, those lamps when filled with oil will burn for ten hours. It was thus, perhaps, not more than a ten hours' shift. This view has been confirmed by the fact mentioned by Pliny,[1] that in the Spanish mines the same method was

[1] "Cuniculis per magna spatia actis, cavantur montes ad lucernarum lumina. Eadem mensura vigiliarum est; multisque mensibus non cernitur dies" (N. H., xxxiii. 4, 70). I owe this reference to Ardaillon.

adopted. For the mines, of course, were utterly dark. Some of the actual chains which shackled the miners as they chiselled their way through the passages have been discovered. We can imagine the frequent anxious glances which the slave cast on the little flame which had been given him as a clock to measure the hours of his slavery. Modern visitors to these interminable galleries have noticed, cut in the walls, numerous niches where the lamp was placed as the workman hewed his way along.

33. The ore was brought to the surface either in bags strapped to the backs of slaves employed for that purpose, or in baskets attached to ropes and drawn up by pulleys. In the workshops (ἐργαστήρια) the analysis took place, and special slaves were engaged in bruising the ore, others in washing, and others in smelting it. Iron pestles, stone mortars, and sieves were used in the process, and in various shapes the metal was taken to Athens to be stamped. For the State remained sole proprietor of the mines, even after mining rights had been assigned to private individuals. The State's share, payable in bullion or in cash, was augmented by a percentage on the profits. The workshops were private property, and could be sold by one lessee to another; but, contrary to the views of earlier writers, it appears that the mining rights were not transferable, and that concessions could be obtained only from the State. A fact which adds a strange piquancy to the ethics of the entire system is that different sections of the mine were named in honour of different gods. Thus we hear of one portion called after Poseidon. He and Athena and Nemesis had each a temple in Laurion, but surely it was to the temple of Nemesis that the thoughts of the slaves chiefly turned.

34. If we wish to measure the amount of human

fatigue involved by the successful exploitation of the mines of Laurion, we cannot do better than turn to a picture of similar operations in ancient Egypt. It is very remarkable that Plato, who was fascinated by Egypt, should have proposed, for the treatment of Athenian slaves, the regulations which were in force in the Egyptian mines. For it was a rule in Egypt to separate those slaves who spoke the same language. And it is very probable that the Greek speculators, merchants, and engineers who had visited Egypt had come back full of enthusiasm for Egyptian industrial methods. Now, Diodorus Siculus has given us a picture of slave labour in the gold mines of Egypt which may well represent what was passing in the silver mines of Laurion. The slaves, we are told, were made up of criminals and ordinary prisoners of war. Since they spoke different languages, conspiracy was impossible; and, besides, they were all in chains. The most robust were employed in breaking the soil with pickaxes, and they followed the natural windings of the veins of metal far into the earth's interior, thus creating a series of subterranean galleries. They worked naked, and lamps were strapped to their brows to illuminate the darkness. "They are compelled to work day and night incessantly," says Diodorus, "and are watched so carefully that escape is impossible."[1] Any relaxation of toil, any pause to ease the bent body, was immediately punished by the lash or by the blows of the overseer. Child labour was also employed, because sometimes the windings and openings were so narrow that only a child could enter them and gather the precious débris, which was then carried to the mouth of the mine, where the ore was extracted. Neither age nor sex was spared, says Diodorus, and he adds quaintly

[1] Bk. III. 12, Miot's translation (Paris, 1834), vol. ii. p. 17.

that the slaves "had no time to look after their own bodies."[1]

35. Whereas, however, slaves in Egypt were kept at work only in order to increase the revenues of a king, in Attica they were kept at work only in order to increase the revenues of a democracy. It has been supposed that because at Laurion revolts were few the condition of the slaves may not have been as unhappy as writers like Plutarch believed it to be. But if revolts were few the reason was that the slaves were chained. Besides, the removal of a ladder or the blocking of a passage would be sufficient to compel the slaves to capitulate, and under such circumstances insurrection would have been impossible. Since a strike in the mines would have paralysed Athenian trade, we may be sure that the utmost precautions were taken to prevent it. The miners were practically in jail, and in the most hopeless of jails, and the entire community was their jailer. And yet Athens owed not merely her commercial but her political greatness to the mines of Laurion. The silver was so pure that it became famous, and other Greek states bought it for their own coinage. Athens became the silver market of the eastern Mediterranean. The Laurion mines were, in fact, her greatest asset, and they helped to raise and to

[1] It is interesting to compare this narrative not merely with the account of the Athenian mines but with a recent account of modern mining operations in South Africa. Sir William Crookes, in an address to the British Associates, said "that in the diamond mines at Kimberley the scene below ground was bewildering in its complexity. All was dirt, mud, and grime: half-naked men, dark as mahogany, lithe as athletes, dripping with perspiration, picking, shovelling, wheeling the trucks to and fro, keeping up a weird chant, which rose in force and rhythm when a greater task called for excessive muscular strain. The whole scene was more suggestive of a coal mine than a diamond mine, and all this mighty organisation, this strenuous expenditure of energy, this costly machinery, this ceaseless toil of skilled and black labour, went on day and night just to win a few stones wherewith to deck my lady's finger."—Report of the meeting of the British Association at Kimberley (*Morning Post*, Sept. 6, 1905).

maintain her credit. Her slaves were, therefore, the real creators of her financial prestige, and the authors of her monopoly. We may even go further and say that it was to them that she owed her navy and her naval supremacy. In the time of Themistocles a proposal was made to divide among the adult citizens the surplus revenue of the mines.[1] But Themistocles persuaded the Athenians to build ships with the money, and those ships gained the victory at Salamis. When, again, we remember that lead from the mines was used as mortar in the fortified walls and as cement for great buildings like the Parthenon, and that many of the by-products, such as colouring matter, were indispensable in various manufactures, we see that the Athenian slaves made an organic contribution to Athenian prosperity. Their labour was one of the main guarantees that the State would continue to meet her obligations, and be able, for instance, to provide wheat gratis to the hungry democracy. It is all the more remarkable, therefore, that in the works of Greek thinkers we meet with no recognition of the unjust basis upon which the political structure of Athens was reared. If we except the poets, who now and again seem to have been conscious that there was something wrong, the best Athenian thinkers, apart from the Cynics and the Stoics, acquiesced in a system which they believed was to be permanent. For they were unable to conceive that a State could have any other industrial basis than slavery. Their view was that a State should be composed on the one hand of free citizens, whose main business was to be self-culture, and on the other of a great inarticulate enslaved mass, who should be the means of creating the national wealth. Xenophon, for instance, who was specially interested in the silver mines, wrote a pamphlet to prove that a still

[1] Herodotus, vii. 144.

greater revenue might be derived from them. He declared, what certainly would not be true to-day, that the supply of silver could never become a drug in the market, and that since the mines were inexhaustible, the State, by employing more slaves, would be able to produce more silver. Therefore, he said, Athens should follow the example of her own citizens and purchase slaves for the purpose of hiring them out to work in the mines. For every free Athenian citizen there should be at least three slaves in the mines. Thus 21,000 citizens would possess 63,000 public slaves, and those who required slaves would begin to hire them from the State. Further, the slaves were to be branded with the Athenian coat of arms.[1] But, adds Xenophon naïvely, we must treat them well *in case* they might become dangerous in time of war.

36. Xenophon probably expressed average Greek opinion regarding the exploitation of slaves. It would be wrong, however, to ignore the fact that from Homer downwards there were recurrent protests against slavery. Homer's more tender view reappears in men like Æschylus and Euripides, and at length finds philosophic support in the school of Antisthenes and of Zeno. At first sight it looks as if Xenophon's rough practical spirit, which was the spirit of the Stock Exchange, had been fully shared by great men like Plato and Aristotle. In the "Republic," however, Plato unfolds the plan of a State in which there are no slaves, and he makes a sympathetic reference to those "hirelings" who *sell* their labour.[2] Even in the "Laws," where slavery reappears, he points out that "many a man has found his slaves superior in every way to brethren or sons."[3] It is clear that both to him and to Aristotle slavery offered problems of anxious thought. It seems to be Plato's later

[1] Xenophon, "Ways and Means," iv. 21.
[2] Rep., ii. 371.
[3] "Laws," vi. 776.

view that the organisation of the State involved some form of servile labour. But when he mentions the fact that it was possible for the master to fall into the power of his slaves, and that it requires a slave-owner to protect a slave-owner, he is really confessing that the system rests not on right but on might. In the case of Aristotle, indeed, it is idle to deny a certain intolerance and a more settled conviction on the necessity of slavery. As spectators of the unstable elements in Greek society, both philosophers probably felt that it would be madness to encourage the forces of anarchy. The entire system had created a moral and economic dilemma. To loosen still further the underpins of a social fabric which was always in danger of collapse would, they doubtless supposed, only create an industrial crisis with increased suffering. But Aristotle's laborious arguments[1] against those who had declared slavery to be "contrary to nature," *παρὰ φύσιν*, are the sign of the existence of a strong opposition party. That opposition is generally credited to the Cynics. The fact that, in spite of their protest, no genuine change seems to have taken place in public opinion, only deepens the tragedy and awakens our sympathy for men who had challenged the traditional policy of enslavement. It is therefore right to remember that in some form there was, at least as early as the fourth century, an anti-slavery agitation in Greece. No doubt the consolations of philosophy are understood only by philosophers. It is difficult to believe that the noble doctrine of a man like Zeno, who maintained that *inner* freedom need never be lost, could have reached the great labouring mass of men. Moreover, the protest of the later philosophers came far too late for the generations of slaves whose labour lay at the foundation of Athenian greatness. Even, again, if we suspect that

[1] "Politics," I., chaps. v. and vi.

Xenophon was wrong in attributing to Socrates the current view that it was just to enslave one's enemies, we cannot say that Socrates was opposed to slavery. He was probably no more opposed to it than Washington. It is characteristic of Greek thought that in Plato's dialogue "Euthyphro," in which Socrates is informed of the murder of a slave, the discussion immediately passes to abstract questions. In a modern dialogue the murder would have formed the main subject. And certainly it is not easy to believe that Euthyphro's father had in turn committed homicide on the murderer for any other reason than that the murderer had destroyed a piece of living property. Nevertheless, the fact that divergent views existed on the duties of masters towards slaves is a sign that the Greek conscience had been stirred. In our condemnation of an entire community, we never know how many obscure acts of mercy have been left unrecorded. The Greek, and especially the Athenian, temperament was often vindictive; but, as the people of Mitylene knew, it was also generous and chivalrous as well as impulsive. We do not know how frequently that temperament had been touched by the sorrows of slavery, just as we do not know how many errands of mercy may be fulfilled in London to-night. The real tragedy of the history of slavery in Greece, as elsewhere, is that the forces of the world proved once again too strong for the forces of love. After all, eighteen Christian centuries passed before there was any genuine attempt to abolish slavery. There are, on the other hand, signs of practical idealism in ancient Greece. The historian who, in such a matter, is afraid to talk with two voices in case his narrative may thereby appear to be contradictory, has never felt that confusion of good and evil of which all history is full. It is rather his duty to display the contradictions,

because they indicate the road of advance. At least we must not attempt to break the thin-spun threads which connect the conscience of the modern with the conscience of the ancient world. It is undeniable, for instance, that the great tragic poets of Athens were aware of the social disease of the day. They seized upon the immense emotional and dramatic value of those pictures of slavery which they presented to their audiences. For every man, woman, and child in the theatre might one day become a slave. Thus Æschylus, who had fought at Marathon and had actually witnessed the sudden loss of human freedom in war, makes Agamemnon bid Clytemnæstra deal gently with the captive Cassandra—

> "I charge thee
> Give courteous welcome to this stranger maid;
> God's face inclines to him whose hand is light
> In victory." [1]

It was Sophocles, who had been a general in the field, who declared that although the body is in slavery the soul may be free. And Euripides, whose chorus is frequently composed of captives, betrays the deepest sympathy with slaves and all

> "The simple nameless herd of Humanity." [2]

For in Athens, as in Hindustan, the first protest against wrong came not from the intellect but from the emotions.

37. Now, it is important to notice that this contradiction in Greek opinion regarding slavery was not confined to the poets and the philosophers, but reappeared in the theory and practice of Athenian law. For although the slave was not considered to be a citizen

[1] Agam., 949 *sqq.*; Warr's translation.
[2] The *Bacchæ*, translated by Gilbert Murray.

or even a "person," and was thus debarred from bearing witness in the law courts, it was nevertheless often found necessary to make use of his testimony both in civil and in criminal cases. But his own voluntary confession was considered to be valueless. To possess any value at all it would require to be extracted from him as from an unwilling witness. Hence he was interrogated only by torture. In many of the reports of civil suits which have reached us the torture of slaves is seen to have been one of the regular forms of legal procedure. And that it had become part and parcel of the entire Athenian legal system is proved by the fact that Aristotle places it among the most important methods of discovering truth.[1] Whereas in Rome, at least from the reign of Hadrian, torture was applied to slaves only when they were summoned as witnesses in criminal cases, or were themselves suspected of crime, at Athens in every paltry civil dispute the rack and other forms of compulsion were used. Even the voluntary evidence of a slave was rejected. He was not supposed to be capable of speaking the truth. And if his master, desirous of sparing him so great suffering, refused to surrender him, the fact was considered to be strong proof that the master had something to conceal. In such cases the jury became prejudiced and the suit was lost. Even when the torture cost the life of the slave, his dying cries were duly registered as satisfactory evidence. Experts in torture called Basanistæ conducted the examination, and we hear of numerous instruments which remind us of the Spanish Inquisition. In the case of the death or mutilation of the slave, damages were paid *to the master* by the party who had demanded the slave's sur-

[1] "Ἁι δὲ βάσανοι μαρτυρίαι τινές εἰσιν. Ἔχειν δὲ δοκοῦσι τὸ πιστὸν, ὅτι ἀνάγκη τις πρόσεστι" (*Rhet.*, i. 15, 4). Later, however, he admits that a man subjected to torture may speak both truth and falsehood.

render. On the other hand, this extraordinary system had its dangers even for the slave-owner. For a slave enduring torture was often tempted to purchase immediate relief by making false accusations against his master. And the temptation was all the greater since in cases of conviction of the master the slave gained his freedom. We are surprised that a society organised upon such a basis was able to survive a single year. Almost all actions at law involved the torture of slaves, and neither age nor sex brought exemption. Some of the great civil orations of the Athenian orators were built upon evidence extorted from the convulsions of slaves. Perhaps no other fact casts so strange a light upon the moral confusion of Greek civilisation. The eloquence, the diatribe, the skilful arguments of Attic orators were often the occasion of scenes in which the methods of the witch trials of the Middle Ages seem to have been rehearsed.

38. Demosthenes, for instance, professed to have the strongest belief in evidence based upon the torture of the human body (*ἔλεγχος τοῦ σώματος*). If we turn to his speech against Onetor we find that he reminds the judges that at Athens the testimony of a tortured slave was always considered to be more valuable than the voluntary confessions of a freeman. Never, he says, was there a case in which a slave suffering torture spoke falsely.[1] Hence we are not surprised to know that the word "martyr" is derived from the Greek word for a witness (*μάρτῦς*). We may, therefore, rate at its true value the boast of Demosthenes that at Athens slaves enjoyed more freedom than the free citizens of all other countries.[2] In his speech against Midias he quotes a remarkable Athenian law to the following effect: "If any one insult another, be that other man, woman, child,

[1] Onet., i. 37. [2] Third Philippic, 3.

freeman or slave, or commit any illegal act (παράνομόν) against any such, let any Athenian who chooses (being under no civil disability) lodge his complaint," &c.[1] And then he adds: "Listen, O Athenians, to the humanity of the law which does not suffer even slaves to be insulted."[2] But it is certainly difficult to admire the "humanity" of a legal system which, while it appears to have protected the slave from mere insult, actually tortured his body for purposes of legal evidence. For the law thus practised upon the slave a far greater outrage. Moreover, if we turn to the writings of Xenophon we shall discover the real meaning of the apparent "humanity" of Athenian law. Xenophon, or whoever wrote the earlier "Polity of the Athenians," likewise complains of the "licence" of the slaves at Athens. He says that there was the most amazing want of discipline among both the slaves and the alien immigrants, and he complains that a slave would actually refuse to get out of one's way on the public road. And it was not permitted to beat these insolent slaves in public.[3] But he proceeds to give what cannot be regarded as a merely malicious and ironical explanation. The reason, he says, why it was forbidden to assault them in the streets was that a freeman might be mistaken for a slave. For he adds that neither in dress nor in personal appearance could the one be distinguished from the other. But if this is the real meaning of the law cited by Demosthenes, his enthusiasm is to be explained by the forensic needs of the moment.[4]

39. We thus discover behind all the glitter of Greece a dark background of hate and suffering. To suppose

[1] Midias, 529. [2] Ibid., 530.

[3] "Polity of the Athenians," i. 10.

[4] Demosthenes had been publicly insulted in the theatre by Midias, and hence urges that if it was illegal to assault a slave it was surely illegal to assault a citizen.

that we know Athens when we have read her naval and military history, or when we have listened to her orators, philosophers, and poets, or when we have seen the remains of her art, is to suppose that we know a building merely because we have examined the façade. Rather, it is in the damp, foul air of her silver mines and in the torture dungeon of her law courts that we discover her strange foundations. Phidias sculptured her gods and her athletes, but if he had sculptured one single convulsed figure among her slaves we should have seen in a flash the dark realism which lay beneath her grandeur. Aristotle extols the body of the Athenian freeman, which was made exquisite and supple by exercise in the gymnasium. But the slave was sent down to the more dreadful gymnasium of the mines, and his body was only the *corpus vile* for the grotesque experiments of the law courts. Pindar praises the Athenians for having laid "the gleaming foundations of freedom," whereas the real foundation of their State was slavery. And historians have too often seen Athens not from underneath but from the top, and have ignored the strange paradox of her theory of liberty.

40. The liberation of slaves took place in Athens practically in the same manner, and generally for the same reason, as in Babylon. The freedman was never really out of the grasp of his former master, but became a "client." If he gave offence or displayed ingratitude he was liable at any moment to be recalled into servitude. Moreover, if he had been branded he bore during his whole life an ineffaceable stigma. But a clever slave was often allowed to carry on business in order that the master might share the profits. In Greece there was, further, a peculiar form of manumission which consisted in dedicating the slave to a god. For instance, the Delphic inscriptions present us with numerous cases

in which slaves had been sold to the Temple of Apollo at Delphi, and had been thereby declared to be free. At first sight it seems as if the motive was purely religious, and analogous to the mediæval practice of royal alms or royal pardon conceded "for the sake of the king's soul." But, according to Foucart, it was the slave who paid for his liberty, even although his master's name appears as the seller in the contracts.[1] It was characteristic of the rigid logic of the Greeks that a slave enfranchised in this manner was henceforth protected not because he was a freedman, but because he was now the property of a god. Foucart appears to explain such cases mainly on religious grounds. It is far more likely, however, that the reasons were financial. For, on the one hand, the Delphic priests discovered in the practice a valuable means of increasing the temple's revenues, and, on the other, the slave-owners, by surrendering their slaves, gained the powerful patronage of the Oracle. In one case the sum of four minæ was paid to Apollo.[2] From the Delphic inscriptions we also ascertain the strange fact that men were in slavery to the dead. Thus there is a case in which two slaves are compelled to tend their master's tomb at Delphi, and are forbidden to leave the district.[3] In other words, they were practically chained to his monument, so that even the dead were tyrants. It is certainly not necessary to deny that many Greeks treated their slaves humanely. Both as individuals and as a nation they frequently displayed generous impulses. The fact that slaves were often buried in the family tombs, and that affectionate epitaphs were written for them, is a proof that intimate relations,

[1] *Memoire*, p. 50.

[2] *Inscriptions Recueillies à Delphes*, No. 73.

[3] Inscriptions, Nos. 142, 420. The sale to a god has been explained on the ground that, since a slave was incapable of being a party to a contract, there was no other method of emancipating him.

had sometimes existed between them and their masters long before both discovered the last level and equality in death. It is even more remarkable to find that on the field of Marathon a special monument was erected to commemorate those slaves who had bravely fallen in the battle. But facts like these only intensify the enigma of a society which, although it had discovered high qualities in its slaves, was yet founded upon a negation of their rights.

41. When we consider not only that the industries of Athens were chiefly in the hands of slaves, but that, as Xenophon tells us, the slaves manned the Athenian fleet and were liable to military service, we are forced to conclude that the Athenian Demos had become a tyrant, and an idle tyrant. For although at the outbreak of the Peloponnesian war some thirty thousand citizens took the field, the national vigour had been sapped during the years of prosperity. The Athenian decline cannot be attributed merely to political and external causes, but to inner wastage. The introduction of innumerable slaves of both sexes had ruined not only the industry but the homes of the freemen. It is most remarkable that the decrease of births among the citizens became manifest precisely during the period when Athens was importing the greatest number of slaves. Whereas immediately after the Persian wars a rapid increase of the free population took place, during the later phases of the Peloponnesian struggle it was found impossible to make good the losses in the burghers' ranks. The birth-rate had become stationary, and it remained stationary throughout the fourth century. Since for more than fifty years Athens had enjoyed great prosperity, this fall in the birth-rate cannot be explained by supposing that marriage was a luxury beyond the means of the average citizen. The cause lay far deeper, and is to be found

in those irregular relationships which, in Greece as in Hindustan, existed between the governing class and the slaves. The stability of the family became seriously impaired, and the number of freeborn sons was gradually diminished. With the slaves came luxury and idleness and the atrophy of the ruling race. Political liberty is not sufficient to save a State. In Athens it had been long ago obtained, and the later struggle for equality had been likewise successful. The community was now divided into citizens and slaves, and the few capitalists who remained possessed no political privileges. As in France immediately after the Revolution, one *citoyen* was no better than another, and all were on the same level. Individualism had become lost in collectivism. The class of free artisans, however, had been destroyed in the competition with servile labour, and the view became popular that the State's revenue existed only to be divided. The co-operation of a large body of citizens in judicial administration and executive government helped to intensify these communistic ideas. The institution of the paid juries promised at least a subsistence to those who were without a trade, and the declaration of the lots was awaited with eagerness. Six thousand of the judges thus chosen were maintained by the State, and on the expiry of their term of office their places were filled by another six thousand upon whom the lot had fallen. But these social changes created a new political situation. There can be no doubt that courts so constituted played a great part in accelerating the catastrophe. It was dangerous enough that civil suits and criminal cases were bungled by a host of ill-educated judges, who were ready to listen to the flattery of clever advocates or to accept the bribes of unscrupulous clients; but it was still more dangerous when political trials and impeachments took place before a body of men easily

swayed by political passion. The best intellects were not tempted to take part in such a judicial system, and hence the Triobolon or judge's fee attracted only an impecunious majority before whom the greatest statesman or general of the day might be arraigned. But if the administration of justice was thus precarious, it cannot be said that the political affairs of the country were in safer hands. The Ecclesia or assembly was composed of all the citizens, and in their corporate capacity they arrogated to themselves nothing less than infallibility. It is true that their greatest man played an important part in creating a policy, but in the hour of crisis the democracy distrusted him, impeached and fined him, and at last rejected his advice.[1] It is also true that the government was partially centralised in the Council of Five Hundred, a sort of Grand Committee appointed for the transaction of public business. But it existed only to carry out the behests of the assembly. Moreover, its members were chosen not by merit but by lot, and there was no guarantee of a continuity of policy. The ten sub-committees of fifty, who took office by turns throughout the year, constituted a pitiful expedient whereby the Athenian jealousy of individual authority and pre-eminence was appeased. A uniform diplomacy did not exist, because there was practically no Foreign Office. Although it seems that the generals were sometimes responsible for the conduct of foreign affairs, the fifty ministers of the moment might intervene and prevent or accelerate action. Individual initiative was thus overawed in the presence of omnipotent majorities.

42. The Athenians were familiar with every form of government, and were restless under all of them. After the early mobile had transformed itself into an immobile community, it was destined to know every phase of a

[1] Thuc., ii. 65.

political problem which is not yet solved. When shepherds had become husbandmen, and husbandmen had become traders, the tribal communism had long given way to an individualism which became symbolised in a monarchy tending to become absolute. But the monarchy was checked, and at length destroyed, by an aristocracy which in turn suffered numerous transformations, and at last gave way before a democracy. But the democracy was no more stable than its predecessors, and then came socialism and disintegration and the return to a tyranny. In the extreme democratic stage of her political evolution Athens had thus almost reached the point whence she and other Greek communities had started. But the difference between the earlier and the later communism consisted, first, in the social fact that in the primitive period there were no slaves, and, second, in the political fact that a system which was adapted to a small clan became impracticable when applied to an artificial society. The Homeric Agora was an assembly easily controlled, but no assembly house could have contained all the Athenian citizens who were entitled to vote. Representative government had not been invented, and a clumsy political mechanism was expected to do the work of the State. The theory underlying the Athenian constitution was that every citizen possessed a fraction of the sovereignty, and that when all the fractions were combined in the assembly the will of the people became known. But not all the citizens dwelt at Athens, and many were unable to attend the Ecclesia. Hence policy was shaped by an assembly which was not really representative. A single city exercised something like a tyranny, not merely within but beyond the limits of Attica. And so far as its own populace was concerned, the democratic ideal, which was really socialistic, had created a mass of human beings idly leaning upon each other and upon

their slaves, as the joists and pillars of a rickety building lean for mutual support until the whole is in a state of collapse. The Athenians invented political co-operation, but they did not discover how to preserve the energy, the liberty, and the rights of the individuals who agreed to co-operate, and they destroyed the rights of those whose co-operation was never invited. When the crisis came and Athens was called upon to meet her enemies, a mass of shifting and incoherent opinion attempted to conduct a war.

43. It has been rightly observed that since all the accounts which have come down to us regarding the Athenian democracy were written by its enemies, the condemnation may be too severe. Nevertheless, a social and political system must be judged by its results, and in the case of Athens the results were disastrous not merely for the Athenians but for the whole of Greece. No State was ever so rapidly corrupted by success. Polybius likens her glory to a flash of lightning. The courage which she did display in the war which ruined her was the inheritance from the earlier generation, and it appeared to desert her after the last of the old guard had fallen. Plato, in a very remarkable passage in which he discusses the loss of the martial spirit which his own age witnessed, attributes its cause to the love of wealth and ease.[1] But he does not mention a deeper cause, which lay in that system of slavery of which he too had been an advocate. For it was slavery which created the ease and idleness of the ruling class. Comfort had become an ideal, and the time came when a generation of citizens who were not soldiers hired mercenaries and compelled slaves to make up an army. Athens was at last content only to be a market, and even her commercial supremacy was due not so much to the intelligence

[1] "Laws," viii. 831.

of her own people as to the labour and intelligence of her slaves. There was a Greek saying that so greedy were the Athenians that they died with their hands open as if still expecting money. The day arrived when, as we have seen, they accepted pay for the trouble of attending their own assembly. They clamoured for doles out of the public funds, and for free tickets for the theatre. Indeed, the entire State became a theatre, in which a spoiled and fastidious audience called for something new.

44. Never, indeed, have internal and external causes combined so suddenly for the destruction of a State. The Athenians had become the parasites of their slaves, but it was still more ominous that they had become the parasites of their allies. Aristotle tells us that more than 20,000 citizens—in other words, almost the entire free adult male community—were supported by the tribute of the allies. "In this way," he says, "they earned their living."[1] Thus the causes which were wrecking Athens from within were really the same causes which were threatening to wreck her from without; and she was like a human being who, although suffering from inward disease, is placed in the least favourable environment. A mass of discontent had developed within her own walls, and was now developing within the communities which recognised her sovereignty. The attitude which she had assumed towards her slaves was the same attitude which she displayed towards her allies and her enemies in Hellas. According to Aristotle, "the Athenians began to treat their allies in a more imperious fashion."[2] It must not be forgotten, however, that the Delian federation of which Athens was the leader was a loose union of oligarchies and democracies, and that it was her task to discover

[1] "Athenian Constitution," 25. "Ἡ *μὲν οὖν τροφὴ τῷ δήμῳ διὰ τούτων ἐγίγνετο.*"

[2] Ibid., 24.

a common policy. Originally that policy had consisted in the defence of Hellas against the Persians, and since Athens almost single-handed had vanquished the enemy, the leadership of the league was hers by right. Now, the oligarchies were justly suspected of betraying the cause of Hellas, whereas the democracies remained true to Athens and to the common duty.[1] Hence the Athenians were tempted to encourage the democracies at the expense of the oligarchies. Like the French Revolutionists they indulged in a propaganda, and every State which had not reached the same democratic stage of development was regarded as an enemy. At most, the oligarchies were only tolerated. The situation was delicate and dangerous, especially since all the allies were compelled to pay an annual tribute which the Athenians disposed of as it pleased them. Athens was charged with using it for her own aggrandisement.[2] She sent tax-gatherers through the States, and sometimes placed garrisons to enforce her rights. Her squadrons patrolled the sea, which she had practically annexed. Moreover, the allies were compelled to have not only their political disputes settled in the Athenian courts, but their civil cases as well, so that Athenian law was made to override the law of the different communities. Whereas this system was indispensable for the settlement of the public policy of the league, it became intolerable when applied to the private concerns of the allies. Even Pericles admitted with a wince that the Athenians had become despots. "For now," he said, "you are tyrants: the world thinks it was wrong to seize the tyranny, but it would be dangerous to surrender

[1] Oncken, ii. p. 115.

[2] "Im Gegentheil, wenigstens die bemittelten Athenischen Bürger haben auch finanziell unvergleichlich höhere Opfer gebracht" (Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, *Aus Kydathen*, p. 27).

it."[1] But it was a tyranny on the top of other tyrannies. When we remember that the allied States likewise possessed slaves, who were the chief instruments in creating the yearly tribute which Athens consumed, we are not surprised that an empire so artificially organised was near its collapse.

45. When, therefore, those who had once been the allies and those who had always been the enemies of Athens at last combined for her destruction, we are presented with a very dramatic spectacle. For the Athenians, who at that moment were among the greatest slave-owners of Greece, were now fighting in order to prevent *themselves* from falling into slavery. From our present point of view this is the real interest of the Peloponnesian war (431 B.C.). It is clear that the people had become aware that they were now in the predicament of their own slaves, because Pericles attempted to divert their thoughts from that fact by insisting on the larger issue, the maintenance of the empire.[2] Within those walls of Athens thousands of slaves had been struggling for freedom during generations of tyranny. But the Furies were now awake. As we have seen, not the least ironical fact in the history of Athens is that there was a Temple of Nemesis with "a lordly portal" in Sunium, not far from the silver mines of Laurion, where the slaves were working in chains. And, as if to vindicate her name, it was with slavery that the free Athenians were threatened. Their greatest thinker had said "it was just to enslave one's enemies," but now Greeks were enemies of Greeks. We cannot, however, trace the changing fortunes of a struggle in which not merely Athens but all Hellas was weakened and made ready for the invader. But we must notice how Athenian pride was humbled when,

[1] "ὡς τυραννίδα γὰρ ἤδη ἔχετε αὐτήν, ἣν λαβεῖν μὲν ἄδικον δοκεῖ εἶναι, ἀφεῖναι δὲ ἐπικίνδυνον" (Thuc., ii. 63).

[2] Ibid., ii. 63.

for instance, the Samians with a kind of malignant ingenuity branded the freeborn Athenians whom they captured as slaves with the stamp of the coat of arms of Athens. And we hear that after the disaster at Syracuse hundreds of Athenians were branded on the forehead with the figure of a horse before they were thrown into the quarries, where the forced labour was even more terrible than in their own silver mines.

46. States, like individuals, appear to suffer from a kind of hæmorrhage, and Greece opened her own veins. The moment of her exhaustion was the opportunity of the northern invader. Every Greek State had reached, for the same reason, the same stage of decay. Thus when the leadership had passed from Athens it was held only for a short time by Sparta and by Thebes. It was when Philip of Macedon saw that Greeks had ceased to fight for Greeks that he began that series of aggressions which ended in the subjugation of the entire Hellenic race. Less than one hundred and fifty years had passed since the battle of Marathon, and already the foundations of Greece were loose and trembling. Athens, for instance, began to offer her enemies not fight but parley, and great orators took the place of great soldiers. The navy had perished. A sense of helplessness fell upon a race which had wasted itself in internecine conflict. But the wealth which they had accumulated attracted their enemies, and Athens because of her art became a special object of plunder and sack. For there was already in operation that series of destructive causes which at last transformed Hellas into a Roman province, and Athens into a provincial town of the Roman Empire.

47. The ethics of Athenian history are strangely confused, for the moral ideas expressed in the theories of her thinkers are in violent contradiction with the theory and practice of the State. The Athenians possessed words

for Liberty, Equality, and even for Fraternity, but all those great doctrines were evolved at the expense of slaves. The political struggle was, therefore, artificial and insincere. It has been said by a great scholar that many writers foolishly write of Athens as if it were a Lost Paradise. The truth is that behind her façade we discover an industrial tyranny and workshops full of slaves. When it is remembered that without their labour the leisure which went to create Athenian art, literature, and philosophy would not have been possible, we cannot resist the conclusion that the culture of Athens was bought at too high a price. Greek ethics are full of elaborate discussions about justice, but no amount of casuistry will convince us that the treatment of Athenian slaves was just.

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CHAPTER V

ROME

Perhaps nothing illustrates so impressively the rise and the fall of States as the history of naval power on the Mediterranean. For that sea was named and renamed in accordance with national pride by the different nations whose navies became successively omnipotent upon it. Carians, Cretans, Egyptians, Etruscans, Phœnicians, and Carthaginians had all regarded it as a national possession and their special highway. After Salamis, which was the Trafalgar of Greece, the Greeks might well call the Mediterranean "the Greek sea." Long before that date, however, Greeks had found their way seawards and westwards, because, as we saw, a Greek outpost about the close of the seventh century had appeared at Marseilles. Even the Italian gulfs, such as the Adriatic and the Tyrrhene Sea, had received their Greek names before any Roman boat was built. Yet one by one these naval nations had passed away like the shadows once cast by the sails of their ships, and at length the Romans in their turn renamed the Mediterranean "our sea," *mare nostrum*.

2. Now, this maritime hegemony which had been seized by one hostile power after another was the means of the extension of civilisation along the southern shores of Europe to Italy, Spain, and Britain. The gradual abandonment of the term "inner sea" for the Mediterranean is a sign that sailors had become familiar with

that "outer sea" which was believed to surround the world. The word "Mediterranean" was not used until the third century before Christ. Early navigators moved cautiously from cape to cape, and at first never ventured towards a horizon where no land was visible. There is evidence that they long feared the sea, and perhaps those scholars are correct who detect signs of this fear in one of the Greek words, θάλασσα. It used to be supposed that that word contained the root for "salt." But a primitive people, when they saw the sea, were at first ignorant that it was salt, and it is more probable that they were impressed by its dynamic aspect. They would either imitate its sound in such a word as *Thalassa*, or attribute to it that "motion," "agitation," even "menace" and "terror," which belong to the sea.[1] Many primitive words betray a deep, although perhaps unconscious, poetry in their seizure of the characteristics of things. Thus perhaps the name of the Greek sea god Poseidon is, as Plato suggests, connected with the word to "shake," for he was the "earth shaker."[2] That name must have been given by men who had felt the vibration of the shore as the waves struck it. And, indeed, another Greek name for the sea, πέλᾰγος, means the "striker."[3] It was only for skilful Greek mariners that the sea became, what Homer sometimes calls it, "the briny," or, as it was still otherwise named, πόντος, a highway. The Romans, who were essentially landsmen and more cautious than the Greeks, were slower to learn seamanship, and, in spite of some later naval victories, were never really at home on

[1] ταράσσω, Sanskrit *targ.* Curtius, ii. 90; Vaniček, 302.

[2] Cratylus, 403. Herodotus (vii. 129) describes Poseidon as the cause of earthquakes. Fick (*Vergl Wörterbuch der Indogermanischen Sprachen*, i. 507) suggests that "Poseidon," as "lord of waves," is derived from ποτι, Lat. *potis*, and οἶδμα, the swell of the ocean.

[3] Sanskrit *plag.* Another derivation, however, connects πέλᾰγος with πλάξ, flat.

the sea. *Their* word for it, *mare*, is, if the opinion of some scholars be correct, likewise significant of the kind of awe with which men first looked on the sea. For *mare* is believed to be only a form of *mors*, death.[1] The Romans, indeed, appear to have had little confidence in their sea god, Neptune, whose name, besides many of their nautical terms, came from Greece. Even in the height of her greatness Rome frequently neglected sea power, and, according to Polybius, slaves and the riff-raff formed the majority of her sailors. The coasts of Italy and the entire Mediterranean had been explored by alien seamen long before Rome had launched a ship or Romans had learned to use an oar. No doubt a ship's prow figures on her most ancient coins, and as early as 394 B.C. she sent a sacred ship to Delphi. But it was by men from the east that the way thither and the means of reaching it had first been shown to her. Although her political strength came originally from the north, a great part of her civilisation and the stimulus which at last goaded her to conquest came from the south and the sea.

3. It was early that history began to cast her nets round the shores of Europe. In 600 B.C. Italy was perhaps still called Hesperia, the Evening Land. The west, in which Homer had seen the golden sunset, seemed to men of that age to be the final Eldorado. But sailors' tales of its unreaped riches had reached the eastern Mediterranean so early that Phœnicians, before 1100 B.C., had sailed past Italy, and had found silver in Spain and tin in the far-off island of Britain. There is a certain fascination in imagining ourselves back in an era in which Europe, whose roads are now all carefully mapped—Europe, whose fields have been sown and ploughed and reaped for ages—lay mapless and full of mystery, and excited men's minds

[1] Weise, *Die Griechischen Wörter im Latein*, p. 209; Curtius, i. 401; Vaniček, p. 708.

with the hope of gold. Adventurers set sail for her coasts in the same spirit in which Cortes and Pizarro sailed for Mexico and Peru. Phœnicia planted Carthage as a great outpost and naval base for the western Mediterranean. Europe began to stretch her arms towards Africa, as she still stretches them to-day, and Sicily, lying midway, became a battlefield. It is, indeed, this change of the battle-ground which strikes us in the opening of European history. In due time, no doubt, Rome sought out again the old battlefield in the East. It was part of her ruthless mission to bring Asia, Africa, and Europe into that triple contact which is to become even still closer than it is to-day. Just as the eyes of the modern world are turning rather to the Pacific than to the Atlantic, so, after the Greeks had destroyed the Persian fleet off the eastern shores of Europe, men became aware that a new era had already begun. The maritime race along the southern and the western coasts of Europe became keener, and the goals were extended. Presently Romans and Carthaginians would meet in Spain, Britain would become a prize, and bold seamen would sail over the German Ocean to the shores of the Baltic in search of amber. The islands acted like magnets and drew them from coast to coast. Elba, which was rich in copper, although first explored and named Ilva by Ligurians, a people from the mainland, was early re-explored and was renamed by the Greeks Æthalia, island of smoke and flame. At first it was not believed that Italy belonged to the mainland at all. Geography was felt to be full of that romance which it has not yet altogether lost. Both to Homer and to Hesiod Italy was an island, and a "holy island." For it was understood that there the haunts of gods and heroes might be visited, and the actual mouth of hell be seen. Every isle, indeed, was an isle of the sirens. There had

been rumours of a strange land where sea and fire were mingled. It is good to imagine the awe with which sailors, for whom every natural fact had a supernatural meaning, first observed smoke and flame rising from the snows of Etna, or passed the restless shore of Stromboli. Those were the men who gave the name of their god of metal and fire, Hephaistos, to one of the volcanic islands lying off Sicily, for they thought that his forge might actually be heard clanging over the sea. Sicily, too, was believed to be his workshop, and the entire southern coast of Italy his hot hearth. There the landscape betrayed signs of so great volcanic labour, and combined so much beauty with so much desolation, that it was conceived to be nothing less than an advanced portion of the scenery of the under-world. For those men, when they brought their trade and traffic to Europe, brought also the merchandise of old romance.

4. It comes as a surprise that the most *authentic* date in early Italian history marks the foundation not of Rome but of such Greek cities as Sybaris, Croton, and Tarentum (721–700 B.C.). While the infant Latin communities were still turning restlessly in their cradle of the Alban Hills, a fringe of foreign cities surrounded the south-eastern, the southern, and the south-western coasts of Italy. It was the overcrowding of Greece which led adventurous Greeks over a hazardous sea, and compelled them to settle in a land which they called Fitalia, the land of oxen. They knew it also as Oinotria, the land of wine. Those ambitious colonists, who thus linked the history of Greece with the history of Italy, dreamed of a new western Hellenic Empire, because they gave the name of Great Greece to the southern parts of the Italian peninsula. Older even than Tarentum or Sybaris was the Ionic city of Cumæ, which was built perhaps as early as 1000 B.C. That those Greek colonies

in the west were of ancient date is proved by the fact that they had time long before Rome became politically important to plant daughter cities in the Italian land. Thus Cumæ gave birth to Parthenope and to Neapolis (Naples), and Sybaris was the mother of Poseidonia (Pæstum), which she dedicated to Poseidon, who, as those colonists believed, had brought the Achæans safely from the shores of Greece. News of the splendour of their cities had reached the Latin burghers, who, in their fortified hill villages, were more or less isolated from the vivid life which had sprung up on the seacoast. Indeed, in the eyes of the Greek settlers the landsmen were probably barbarians. Sybaris, for instance, rapidly passed through the whole cycle of vanity and became a byword. She and other opulent cities, Etruscan as well as Greek, had seized the main commerce of Italy, and all the inland communities were shut out from the maritime traffic. Capua, the capital of Campania and the home of the gladiators, if originally an Italian or an Etruscan city, became early and deeply Hellenised. Her fashionable street, the Seplasia, was full of shops in which the perfumes and the fabrics of the East were bought. So contagious was her luxury that when the Samintes conquered her in 424 B.C., although they belonged to the most incorruptible of Latin stocks, they became thoroughly corrupted. Thus at the opening of Roman history we find that the most southern part of the Peninsula was not merely Hellenised but Orientalised, and already satiated. Just as many towns in the valley of the Euphrates rose and fell before Babylon rose over them all, so in Italy many brief and futile cities grew great and grew weak before Rome was audacious enough to declare herself eternal.[1] For although some of them, like Tarentum, played a more prolonged and substantial

[1] "In æternum urbe condita" (Livy, iv. 4).

part in Italian history, most of them only glittered for a few centuries in a brilliant but brittle southern façade which was one day to be destroyed by Rome.

5. The fact that some of those Greek cities of Italy issued a gold coinage implies that they must have enjoyed a wide commercial credit. But, likewise, the fact that many fraudulent coins belonging to that age have been discovered—inferior pieces of metal with a thin veneer of silver—imparts a curious modernity of corruption to their vanished civilisations. The maritime cities were not merely ports of call for Greek and Phœnician ships, but they were also emporia for native manufactures. Thus Tarentum in Calabria grew rich by means of the purple fishery and the manufacture of wool. The Greek sailors, in fact, had tracked the *murex* from the Ægean to the shores of Italy, and doubtless the first Greek settlements were only fishing-stations. But the day came when the wool of Tarentum dyed with Tarentine purple began to rival the stuffs of Tyre. This love of scarlet and purple appears to have been widely spread among ancient peoples. In Sybaris a law was passed which exempted from all taxes those who manufactured or imported the purple. We are told that even the children wore little purple robes, and that their curls were braided with gold. Sybaris appears to have been a bright, shining, amazing city. The cavalry wore saffron tunics over their breastplates. Nowhere could more gorgeous processions be witnessed. The public baths were famous. The roads which led from the city to the villas in the country were covered by awnings to protect wayfarers and grandees from the sun. And the rich Sybarites possessed wine-cellars built on the seashore in order that their wine might be kept cool. It was a people gone somewhat mad on luxury, but the climate was probably the cause of their strange collective

neurosis and bizarre excitement. The city lay in a hollow in a land of fever, and although even in summer the nights were cold, at noon the heat was intolerable. A visitor to the desolate landscape to-day becomes aware of a sinister atmosphere. The soil looks sullen and strange, as if conscious of its own volcanic and destructive power. It was a proverb among the Sybarites that no prudent man ever saw sunset or sunrise. We may be sure that the 300,000 citizens—if that was really their census—were served by at least double the number of slaves. For the Greeks had brought to Italy that horror of mechanical labour which, they supposed, constituted part of their dignity. There is a story that a Sybarite, after he had watched some husbandmen digging in the fields, exclaimed that the mere sight made his bones ache. And we hear of another who was not ashamed to be seen flogging a fugitive slave who had taken refuge at the altar of a god. In fact, the entire social history of Greece was being reproduced, and the entire social history of Rome was being rehearsed by those sumptuous cities which were fixed like parasites on the soil of Italy. Had there been any contemporary statesman to note down the brief biography of their follies, his work might later have been used as a warning to the statesmen of Rome. For the end of their miniature tyrannies foreshadowed the end which likewise awaited *her* immense and more terrible dominion.

6. The Greeks brought to Italy the same political unrest which prevented the national cohesion of the mother-country. Their cities became the scene of that kind of public fury which was specially Greek. It was not merely that in all of them passionate oligarchies and passionate democracies wrecked every municipal structure which was raised, but that in due time city became leagued against city. It seemed as if they had come to Italy to

prolong hereditary hate. At the moment when Athens was driving out her tyrants, Croton was destroying Sybaris, and was so bent upon its utter destruction that the river Crathis, once dear to Sybarites, was diverted from its channel and made to flow over the ruins. These reckless communities had thus brought westwards numerous political problems which have continued to disturb Western civilisation. And yet, as if to prove the fundamental monotony of the political history of mankind, the same kind of problems were already agitating the rising city on the Tiber. Recent investigations have, indeed, discredited the authenticity of early Roman history; but at least it is certain that in Rome, as in Athens, we stumble very early upon a social crisis. In the mere effort at social union lay the causes of immediate disorder. The seven kings of Rome, and such personages as Coriolanus, Junius Brutus, and Cincinnatus, once considered to be real, are now believed by some modern sceptics to be only legendary.[1] It would be foolish to deny, however, that behind their names lay great political events. It is certain that Rome had undergone the same kind of social evolution as Athens. It may, of course, be a too remarkable coincidence that the Romans are made to drive out their tyrants almost at the same date as the Athenians drove out *theirs* (510–509 B.C.), and there can be no doubt that early Roman historians wrote under Greek influence. Political events were antedated, and sometimes, in order to flatter contemporary statesmen, their families were made to play great parts in the earlier national life. Nevertheless, the political and social problems of early Rome cannot have been different from the problems which troubled the Greek colonies and their mother-cities. Athens and Rome were familiar with the same intestinal disorder,

[1] Pais, *Storia di Roma*, i. 491 *sqq*.

and reached the same stage of political disillusion, long before they came into official contact. The earliest conflicts within both States arose out of their agrarian systems. Although Livy may sometimes present us with fiction instead of fact, no one can dispute his statement that in Rome any proposal regarding land never failed to throw the entire State into convulsions.[1] The agrarian problem has been the great problem of history. As we have already seen, and as perhaps we shall see still more clearly in the case of Rome, it was entangled in ancient times with the still vaster problem of servile labour. In Rome the abuse of property in land and the abuse of property in slaves were the two most aggravated forms of her economic and social disease, and they were the chief factors in her ultimate catastrophe. Moreover, those two factors throughout her entire history worked closely together. It was the unnatural accumulation of property, and especially of agricultural property in private hands, that caused a demand for slave labour which finds no parallel even in the history of Babylon. But it cannot be said that those causes of ruin became active only during the Empire. They had been active from the beginning. The Empire was the heir of the Republic, and the Republic had been the heir of the Kingship, and the Kingship had been only the symbol of a community determined upon union. The history of the later magnified State was already foreshadowed in the voracious little community which, fixed almost in the centre of Italy, steadily consumed the entire Peninsula before it began to consume the world. It is generally supposed that the city was founded about 753 B.C. But it was founded only to become the scene of incessant strife. The young community early began to vibrate with the

[1] "Tum primum (486 B.C.) lex agraria promulgata est; nunquam deinde usque ad hanc memoriam sine maximis motibus rerum agitata" (xxiv. 41).

intensest emotion. The monarchy appears to have lasted during two hundred and forty-four years,[1] but its overthrow was only the beginning of centuries of struggle. It was not merely that a great conflict raged round the tenure of land. Other questions affecting elementary human rights soon began to agitate the people. We hear, for example, of one of their leaders, a certain C. Terentillus Arsa, who declaimed during "several days" against the insolence of the patricians, and of another, Appius Herdonius, who summoned the slaves to freedom "in order that he might break the intolerable yoke of their slavery." As a proof of the fearful discord which had already split the national life we are presented with a picture of the outraged people inciting each other to rebellion, and displaying in the market-place the actual chains of their slavery. And just as during the later Republic its leaders were compelled, in order to procure peace at home, to declare war abroad, so, the early oligarchy, in order to hoodwink the nation and to postpone reform, frequently invented the scare of a foreign war, and invited the Romans to attack their neighbours. But the shrewd people declared that their internal were more dangerous than their external enemies, and they knew, as modern Russians know, that military success only doubles the despotism of a bureaucracy. The social paralysis was so widespread that about 454 B.C. a very remarkable compromise was arranged. Tradition says that an embassy was sent to Athens in order to study and to bring back the Laws of Solon, which, as we have seen, had been devised to meet a similar crisis. It is true that this embassy has been likewise treated as a fiction,[2]

[1] Livy, i. 60.

[2] Vico, pp. 214 *sqq.* Pais does not seem to mention that Vico had anticipated the criticism according to which the traditional account of the embassy is *una semplice chimera* (*Storia*, i. 592).

and it has been pointed out that the Laws of the Twelve Tables, which are supposed to have been the result of the mission, contain a *résumé* of the legislation not of the fifth but of the fourth century. For instance, bronze money and rates of interest are mentioned, whereas these were not known in Rome till much later. The money, however, may have been weighed copper; and, besides, various recensions of the Twelve Tables may have been made in which new enactments were gradually incorporated. There is nothing really surprising in the tradition that the Romans had sent to Athens for political guidance rather than to the unstable Greek cities at their own doors. It was now the age of Pericles, and Athens had filled the world with her name. It must, however, have been not the Laws of Solon merely, but the renewed Athenian Constitution which had grown out of them, that the ambassadors were ordered to study. Those writers who, like Vico, doubt whether any embassy was sent at all, forget that the battles of Marathon and of Salamis had been fought, and that the Athenian achievement had stirred the civilised world. What could have been wiser than to imitate the social structure of a State which, having saved itself from the same kind of internal crisis which was now threatening Rome, had likewise been able to save Europe from the Persians? Communication between both States must have been far less difficult than we are apt to suppose. In fact, a regular interchange of ideas had been taking place between the eastern and the western Mediterranean. But, in any case, it is certain that Greeks and Romans had, independently and on the threshold of their national careers, reached the same kind of political deadlock, and had discovered the need of revolution.

7. In the earliest phase of Italian as of Greek history, we become aware of a kind of guerilla advance of races and

divisions of races, all pressing into the Peninsula. Like those Greeks whose political unity became at last embodied in Athens, the people whose national force reached its climax in Rome stopped just in sight of the shore. But behind them, and in front of them, and on all sides great racial movements and disturbances had already taken place. When Livy tells us that the founders of the city chose its site because of its nearness to the Mediterranean, as the great highway of commerce, he is writing history backwards. Strabo, on the other hand, expressed the sensible view that the place was selected for the reason that there was none other to select. Early Italy, like early Greece, was the scene of perpetual racial and tribal displacements. It is generally agreed that the ancestors of the Latin stocks must have entered Italy from the north. They may have come over the barrier of the Alps. But we have no means of ascertaining the velocity of their descent southwards. Their advance was probably very slow, and was impeded not only by the nature of the ground, which was then mainly marshy, but by the presence of other races, either alien or akin, who were already in possession of the land. Italy was an Armageddon long before the word "Italy" had been pronounced. But we know little of the dim pioneer peoples who had first wandered into the country centuries before the date of Rome. Such, for instance, were the Iapygians, who had reached Calabria, and had then become fused with Greek invaders from Epirus. It has been supposed that the epitaphs on their gravestones, which time had buried almost as low as the dead who lay beneath them, prove that their original language was related to Sanskrit. They may thus have been another outpost of that long "Aryan" line which some mysterious instinct had always led towards the sea. Another people, however, the Ligurians, whom some

writers believe to have been Basques, had arrived even earlier in Italy, and had devastated both sides of the Apennines.[1] Their language has perished, but certain local names, such as Neviasca, Veraglasca, appear to indicate that the Ligurians were not related to the Italian stocks. They are described as a wild people, who despised agriculture, lived by the chase, and clothed themselves in the skins of animals. In later times, when Rome had arisen, they were driven into the region round Genoa—whither, indeed, they may have originally come from the Pyrenees—and we hear that they carried on a trade in honey, flesh, and fur. But that once they had been dominant within the Peninsula is proved by the fact that the most ancient name of the river Po, Bodenkos, is a Ligurian word. A people still more enigmatic than the Ligurians, however, and the deadly enemies of them as well as of all other Italian stocks, were the Etruscans. No one has yet succeeded in discovering their real racial relations, although, according to ancient and to some modern writers, they were Asiatic Greeks. The legend that they destroyed three hundred towns is at least a sure sign that they were once the most formidable power in Italy. Their league of cities, of which Veii was the greatest and Rome's nearest neighbour, were doubtless the main centres of Italian civilisation before the arrival of the Greeks. The Etruscans were a seafaring nation, and early entered into commercial relations with Carthage. Their achievements in art are of some importance in the attempt to determine the race. For their sculpture exhibits a thick-limbed type, which bears no resemblance to the Hellenic or the Italian. The discovery in recent times of an Etruscan inscription in the island of Lemnos has been supposed to confirm the Asiatic

[1] Helbig, *Die Italiker*, p. 30.

origin of the race. No one can say with certainty, however, whether the Etruscans arrived in Italy by the land route or by sea. They are so hidden from us in the ages that their gems, their bronzes, their coins, and their pottery, and the two hundred surviving words of their language, do little to explain the real meaning of their presence in Italy. It is significant, however, that among the few Etruscan words which have come down to us two of them are the terms for the male and the female slave, *etera* and *eteraia*. This fact is sufficient to let us see that Etruria also was a slave power, and that her civilisation was one more failure in the long experiment in slavery. What is really important to remember, however, is that at last only the Tiber separated the Roman from the Etruscan frontier, and that Veii was less than twelve miles from Rome. It was Etruria, in fact, which delayed the Roman expansion towards the north.

8. And yet the Etruscans, in turn, had their own enemy in the north, the Celts, who entered Italy in such strength that they were able to obliterate the traces not merely of Etruscans but of Ligurians, and to give to the river Bodenkos its modern name the Po. The discovery of ancient Celtic cemeteries extending for a hundred miles from the Ticino to Verona and Milan is believed to have proved that Celts had settled in Italy long before the fourth century. They had probably arrived in Lombardy as early as 1000 B.C.,[1] and had come from the valley of the Danube. They were the Bedouins of Europe, and went in search of the gold and glitter which fascinated them. Later they would strike a blow at Rome, and capture the city almost on the centenary of Marathon, 390 B.C.[2] Polybius has

[1] Bertrand and Reinach, p. 44.

[2] The actual date, however, of the battle of the Allia appears to have been July 18, 388 B.C. *Cf.* Mommsen, "Hist. of Rome," Bk. II. ch. iv.

drawn a vivid portrait of their warriors, half-naked and adorned with gold necklaces and bracelets, and betraying that impulsive character which has marked the race throughout its strange and sad history. If, however, they were too impatient to construct any solid home for themselves, they knew how to make use of the building of another people. There was a town called Felsina, built by the Etruscans. The Celts swooped upon it, seized it, and gave it a name, Bononia (Bologna), which has lasted into modern times. In a garden near the city a discovery was made which perhaps will enable us, without any weary accumulation of detail concerning those struggles, to see the restlessness of that early Italy. Various strata of burial ground were excavated, and the uppermost contained a Roman tomb. Beneath it lay twelve graves, in which the long iron swords, and the peculiar shape of the brooches beside them, betrayed Celtic remains. But still deeper another sepulchre gave up the bones and ornaments of Etruscans, as well as certain débris which appears to have belonged to pile-dwellers. Now, if we remember that from the foot of the Alps to the southern coast of the Peninsula the deeper soil must contain the dust of different races, we see that long before Rome became great Italy was a necropolis in which many generations were already asleep.

9. This early racial chaos of Italy found expression in a chaos of languages. We are immediately interested only in the Latins, but even in their case we find that on the threshold of the new home the race had broken into hostile groups, each of which developed a special autonomy and a special dialect. The history of the operations of this strange law of racial bifurcation is really the history of nationalities, but we cannot follow its ramifications even within Italy, far less

throughout the world. What interest has the modern reader in dim forgotten tribes such as Picentes, Osci, Marsi, Volsci, Vestini, and a host of others? Why should the Romans, of all the Latins, have succeeded where so many other tribes failed? Why out of fifty seeds should only one germinate and forty-nine die? It is no longer possible to discover in the variations of the Latin dialects the key to the variations of Latin character. And yet there *may* be some subtle reason why Samnites, for instance, used a "p" where Romans used a "q," and why both peoples retained the ablative case while the Greeks lost it. It is certainly remarkable that as late as 400 B.C. the Latin language was spoken within a radius of only fifty miles. Nevertheless, although Italy was as full of tongues as Babylonia, in the end the Umbrian, Sabine, Marsian, Volscian, and many other dialects, together with the Italian, Greek, and the Etruscan languages, were all dominated and destroyed by Latin. If we except the Etruscan, however, and perhaps the Ligurian as both doubtful, the other Italian dialects possessed a common basis of Aryan speech. We have said that Ligurians and Iapygians are the earliest nationalities known to us in Italy. But another people called Siculi, familiar to the writer of the Odyssey, were at least their contemporaries, if not their forerunners; because, although their history does not belong to Italy, they had once passed through the Peninsula. According to Thucydides, however, they passed out of it about 1100 B.C. For they were gradually driven by other tribes to the southern shore, and they sailed for Sicily, to which they gave their name, in rafts or boats probably from Rhegium. Their name is important, because it means "reapers." They were thus an agricultural people, and they have been described as "undeveloped Latins." That is to say,

they, too, belonged to those peoples of Aryan speech who had thus spread themselves so early throughout the lands and seas of the known world. The different routes of the migrations of a people create different qualities of endurance, of invention, of imagination, and produce the most profound change in the racial character of men whose ancestors were once united. Every race has produced within itself deep and permanent variations. Many, although probably not all, of the peoples who spoke Aryan languages originally shared some common blood, and yet after a few centuries of separation they created numerous types of nationality and of dialect. While the Greeks, for instance, were already otiose, the Romans were still practising for the gladiatorial combat which was to be their destiny. The obstacles which their forefathers had met in the Italic Peninsula were probably more formidable than those which the Greeks had met in Greece. It is true that, like the Latins, the Greeks were ceaselessly engaged in fratricidal war. But the Latins were longer surrounded by more powerful alien stocks, as well as by warlike kindred. When they reached Latium the rear was immediately filled up by hostile races. In front of them were the Greeks. If Latins had reached Campania before the Greek immigration,[1] they were soon compelled to retire. Even the coasts were in possession of their enemies. It was no wonder that under such circumstances the entire people were the army, and that when they met in assembly it was at the call of a trumpet and on the signal of a red flag, and in the field of their god of war. Just as the force of explosion and expansion becomes more invincible the more it is concentrated, so Rome accumulated her volcanic energy within an area too small to contain it.

[1] Mommsen, i. 40.

10. Archæological research appears to have proved that the early Italic peoples dwelt in the valley of the Po long before their descendants fought their way into the Plain of Latium. But we should receive an utterly wrong impression if we supposed that the soil of modern Italy resembles its condition in the prehistoric age. In co-operation with nature, man has frequently changed the quality of the soil. Owing to his patient labour, the scenery of at least the lower levels has changed with his own changing history. At first rather the victim of the landscape, he gradually subdued it to his own uses. Impassive as a shepherd, he became active as a husbandman. In Italy, as in Babylonia, much rude engineering was necessary before a marshy land was made fit even for habitation. The remains of pile-dwellings prove that originally a great part of Italy was a swamp. Owing to the overflow of uncontrollable rivers and lakes, the valleys must have been frequently converted into a kind of inland lagoons. We are to imagine ourselves in the middle of a landscape covered always by forest and often by water, with here and there a clearing in an area more or less drained, and in every clearing a village set on piles. Round the village a few scanty fields of flax, beans, and wheat lay cultivated, but the agricultural limit was gradually extended as the land was won from the water. Remains of apples, cherries, hazel-nuts, and wild plums have been found in the sunk débris of those ancient villages. Even the vine may have been cultivated in patches, although, according to Pliny, it became known only late to the Romans.[1] But there seems to be no reason to believe that the vine was brought to Italy by the Greeks, since they would hardly have called it the land of wine if *they* had been compelled to plant the first vine roots. In the older Roman ritual the victims

[1] N. H., v. 17.

were sprinkled not with wine but with milk. But ritual is essentially traditional and stagnant, and a usage belonging to a very primitive period long remains an anachronism. The vine, therefore, may have been known to the Italian pile-dwellers. The most ancient remains about Parma prove that the builders of those wooden and clay cabins thatched with straw did not use iron but bronze. They were not Celts, because their tools are quite different from those recognised as Celtic and discovered on both sides of the Alps. The long iron swords which, as we saw, were found in the tombs at Bologna were brought and were wielded by the hands of later Celtic invaders. And that Etruscans were not the builders of the pile villages is held to be proved by the fact that Etruscan remains are found far nearer the surface. Traces of basket and of leathern work, and flaxen threads implying spinning and weaving, indicate that the pile-dwellers enjoyed a certain amount of civilisation if not of comfort. As a result of an examination of bones, two species of horses and dogs have been identified; and the fact that the remains of such animals as the stag, the boar, and the bear are few in comparison with those of tamer beasts is a sign that the former were hunted by a people who had made a fixed home for themselves in surroundings which, although still wild, were gradually, and perhaps even rapidly, falling under human control. There is reason to believe that those pile-dwellers not only belonged to the Latin stock but were actually the forerunners of the Romans. They lived closely together, and foreshadowed that intense corporate life which was the strength and the glory of Rome and of many other Aryan communities. It is with something like an emotion that we discover that a frail pile village was the humble original form of Rome's great structure. The urns discovered in Alba and the most ancient ruins on the Esquiline hill

betray the same kind of material and the same mode of building which are found in the valley of the Po. In fact, all primitive Latin architecture was based on a plan which is discovered not merely among similar remains in Italy, but in Mecklenburg, Bavaria, and Switzerland, and the conclusion is that the ancestors of Romans had carried into Italy a civilisation which equally belonged to the "barbarians" of Middle Europe, Dacia, and Thrace.[1]

11. Mankind cling to their experience long after they have settled in a new home. The fact that pile villages were constructed on dry ground only means that an architectural tradition had become so strong that it was with difficulty abandoned. And yet when the descendants of the pile villagers arrived in Latium its soil cannot have been essentially different from the soil farther north. Even to-day it betrays its old tendency to marsh-land. In the earlier age of Rome the Forum and the Campus Martius were swamps, and a sheet of water separated the Capitol and the Palatine hill, so that communication between them took place by means of skiffs and rafts. In fact, primitive Italy, like primitive Chaldæa, had an amphibious character, and there is a certain analogy between the sites of Rome and of Babylon. We saw how immense was the struggle against fever in the Chaldæan Plain, and here again in the Plain of Latium we find altars raised to Fever and to Evil Fortune. Those altars were placed on the hills, some on the Esquiline and some on the Palatine; not surely, as Becker supposes, because the higher ground was as unhealthy as the lower, but in accordance with the ancient practice of bestowing special honour on the malevolent power.

[1] Herodotus (v. 16) gives a graphic picture of various pile villages, Asiatic and European, and adds the interesting information that they were communistic, since "the piles which bear up the platforms were fixed in their places by the whole body of the citizens."

The outbreak of pestilence was frequent in Rome, and never failed to produce the utmost terror. But the Romans brought their altars to Fever along with them, for the valley of the Po must have been at least as unhealthy as the Plain of Latium.

12. The origins of many Roman customs lay deep in the past, and help to indicate the continuity in the national life and religion. For instance, the notification and registration of the outbreak of fever and of other epidemics was the duty of the Pontifex Maximus, but in order to understand the real meaning of his office we must go back to the period of migration. Why was it that the Pontifex Maximus, or supreme priest, had his official residence beside the old pile bridge, Pons Sublicius, which spanned the Tiber? It was because he was originally a bridge builder, *pontem facere*.[1] An axe belonged to the insignia of his office, and although later it may have become a mere symbol, it was once a genuine reality. For during the great age of migrations, when Aryans were cutting the earliest roads through the world, many rivers had been met and had been successfully crossed. The Pontifices were the engineers. But from the earliest their duties had a deep religious meaning. We are to remember that every river was believed to be sacred, and the actual manifestation of a god. Men stood with awe at its brink, and felt instinctively that to throw a bridge across it would be a sacrilege and an insult. As usual the dilemma was met by the old device of sacrifice. As soon as the bridge was built, human beings were thrown into the river to appease the river god. This is the real explanation of the fact that in later times straw figures were substituted after reli-

[1] This etymology is retained by many scholars. Tiele, however (*Manuel de l'Histoire des Religions*, Paris, 1885, p. 337), attempts to prove that Pontifex is based on the Sanskrit root *pu* = to purify.

gious ideas had become more humane. But the bizarre symbolism of Roman religion is everywhere to be understood as nothing more than a ritualistic representation of original practical needs. Many of its most repulsive ideas are found on closer inspection to be extraordinarily ingenious. Thus, long after Rome had become the mistress of the world all her national undertakings were preceded by an attempt to consult omens. Almost every magistrate enjoyed the privilege of taking auspices, *auspicia habere*. The word *auspicium* had relations with Sanskrit, for it is a combination of *vi*, a bird, and *spak*, to spy. It was the duty of the magistrate to watch the sky for the motions of birds, which were believed to be divine signs. He was aided in his task by an expert, the augur (Sanskrit *gar*, to announce), who no doubt was often a charlatan, and could never meet his colleague without smiling; but his predecessor in the migratory age was no charlatan at all. The observation of the sky (*servare de coelo*) was of the utmost importance to a people on the march, and those who undertook the function really served the purposes of a modern meteorological office. If we consider the matter sympathetically we shall see that the apparently fantastic notion of foretelling the future by means of the flight of birds is, after all, not so fantastic. At first it had to do only with the weather. Even to-day we are sometimes able to foretell a storm by the fact that sea-birds come landward, and that land birds betray great agitation. With the help of the augur, therefore, a tribe, always nomadic and often shelterless, was able to prepare for the coming storm. And we can easily understand why the flash of lightning and the distant rumbling of thunder began to have a religious significance and to be conceived as a divine warning against any immediate advance. With strange intolerance Mommsen ridiculed the Etruscan lightning religion, but

surely its "jugglery" was only the result of later ritualistic excess and religious decadence. Even Cæsar had his Etruscan soothsayer, who interpreted for him the signs of the day. And we should probably consider this aspect of Etruscan religion as rather a proof of early contact or affinity with Aryan mythology and with the spirit which lies behind the Vedas. Even when the Romans had become a cultured people they did not forget the rude practical instincts of their forefathers. If, for example, during the meeting of the public assembly a thunderstorm broke, the assembly was immediately adjourned. Again, it appears doubtless preposterous that the Romans, who possessed great common sense as well as intellectual power, should have supposed that it was a religious duty to inspect the entrails of animals before undertaking any great enterprise. But the custom belonged to a very remote age. When a wandering tribe arrived in a new region it was natural for them to ask whether the place was healthy and the water pure. It was, therefore, nothing less than a stroke of rude genius which prompted them to procure some of the native cattle, kill them, and examine their entrails for any signs of disease.[1] And in this fact we detect the origin of the apparent absurdities of the art of divination as practised by the Etruscan and Roman soothsayers.

13. Polybius said that the best means towards understanding the Roman character is the study of the Roman religion. If we set aside those elements which were borrowed from a multitude of alien creeds after Rome had conquered the world, there remains a basis of nature-worship in which we discover a sort of subdued form of the ecstasy of the Vedas. The Latins gave their own peculiar expression to the religion which they shared with the rest of the Aryan race. No doubt in her religion, as in her

[1] Von Ihering, "The Evoluton of the Aryan," p. 369.

art and in her letters, Rome was a great plagiarist and interminable borrower. But the period when Latin beliefs were most original was when Greek sculptors were not yet summoned to Rome to make effigies of the gods. Since, however, Greek influence came in very early—even, indeed, in the time of the Tarquins—we are compelled (if we wish to find anything characteristic) to examine the most primitive phases of Latin religion, that is to say, the religion of the people when they were still in close contact with nature. Thus they worshipped Faunus, the god of the fields, and Pales, the goddess of shepherds and their flocks, long before they heard of Demeter or of Pan. The tradition that under the decemvirs—that is, about 450 B.C.—the worship of Apollo appeared in Rome, should perhaps be accepted both as a confirmation of the historical truth of that embassy to Athens which we have already mentioned, and as a sign of the religious curiosity of the Romans. In those days men were as inquisitive about new gods as they are in modern times about new scientific discoveries. The day came when Rome insisted on being officially represented at the oracle of Delphi. But that was the beginning of a flabby cosmopolitanism. In due time all the gods of Egypt and of the East were brought to Rome, just as the gods of vassal cities were brought to Babylon. Mithras, Cybele, Isis, and Serapis all had their Roman devotees; for, much as it may surprise us, there was a latent and repressed mysticism in the Roman mind. Even Cæsar found a certain fascination in the religion of the Druids, and no doubt watched many a fire kindled on the cairns and cromlechs of the hills of Britain (55 B.C.). He attempted to identify the god of the British Druids with the Roman Mercury. Rome, in fact, became the rendezvous of all beliefs, and we hear that in the time of the Empire Chaldæan astrologers were

actually made public teachers and enjoyed great popularity.[1] Generations of Latins, however, had lived and had died in a more primitive faith long before such events took place, and even long before the State consulted the Sibylline Books of Cumæ or appointed a college of experts for their interpretation. When we know that in the age of Sulla (138–78 B.C.) statues of Jupiter, Juno, Minerva, and of other divinities were copied from Greek models and made by Greek hands, we feel that there is little that is really new to say regarding the religion of the State. It had become denationalised and cosmopolitan. And yet, as Polybius has reminded us, it was religion which kept the Roman commonwealth together.[2] The old Forum, which was the centre of the State's life, lay immediately under the temple of Capitoline Jupiter, and indeed was really part of its precincts. In spite of such a fact, it is not in the public but rather in the private worship of the Roman people, in certain moral ideas which grew out of that worship, and in a haunting but somewhat timid view of nature, that the real charm of their religion lies.

14. The temptation to deify everything which manifested any form of power, and even to deify many abstract conceptions, created a certain confusion. Wherever the Roman went there was a god at his elbow. Although Jupiter (Sanskrit, Dyâús-pitâ′) embodied the greatest concentration of religious authority, yet Janus or Ianus, the god of beginnings, took precedence, and was even called "god of gods" (*divum deum*). He was an old sun god, the opener of the doors of the morning. He was the original Apollo of the Romans, and was known to them long before the Apollo of the Greeks and other Greek heroes were worshipped by the men of Etruria.

[1] Juvenal, Sat. vi. 553. "Chaldæis sed maior erit fiducia."
[2] VI. 56.

His earliest effigy with the two heads was so placed in the Forum that one head looked towards the west and the other towards the east. For the opener was also the closer. He was the god of gates. He was the presiding spirit over all beginnings of things, the making of a road or an aqueduct, the opening of an assembly or the declaration of war. He was the spirit of the threshold, but especially of the threshold of the morning. He, Ianus or Dianus, was really the male form for light, as Diana was the female form. This cry for light carries us back to the Vedas, and so connects the purest elements of Roman religion with the first fresh songs of the Aryan race. All the Latin gods (*dei*) are, in the literal meaning, "lights of heaven." The *Iu* of Jupiter is a form of the word which meant dayspring in Asia. Hence Ianus may, after all, only be an aspect of Jupiter. Rome, indeed, was never so impressed by the heavens as was Babylon. We do not find her kneeling, like Babylon, to the stars. But we find in her early religion that wonderful sense of the morning which we found in the Vedas. Much of the history of human awe and emotion is contained in the ancient names of the gods. Even in the words for darker and more doubtful things we discover a persistent desire for idealism. Thus departed spirits were called—perhaps, indeed, more out of fear and obeisance than out of genuine hope—*manes*, "the pure," "the brilliant," those who had gone to dwell with the morning (*mane*). Although Greek and Roman religion rose out of the same sources, there is a sense in which the latter is far more spiritual. The Roman worshipped no lazy Olympians. It is really significant of his character that he gave no nectar to his gods. It was only when he began to drug himself with all the luxuries of the East that both his religion and his virility perished. There was even a stern kind of Protestantism and Puritanism

in the early Roman. He disentangled in a remarkable manner religion from politics, and perhaps that is one of the reasons why that portion of the Aryan race which was governed by priests in Hindustan was ruined, whereas that portion which kept priesthood and politics distinct made so great an advance in Italy. For although the national life was closely connected with the national religion, and although, for instance, the Vestals were the guardians of the sacred symbols of the State, the Roman citizen stood under the special protection of the gods of his own hearth, whose priest he was. Like a Lutheran or a Calvinist, he tolerated no middleman between himself and his household gods. Like the Greeks, the Romans made images, and once they had worshipped fetich stones. Later they worshipped even the emperors. But their view of deity was less sensuous and far more abstract than that of the Greeks. Whereas the Greek devotee looked his god full in the face, the Roman, except when he was in the Temple of Saturn, reverently covered his head. He did not see but he *felt* his god. This is made clear in the words *genius* and *numen*, for both of them imply spiritual presences. The former was the guardian angel, a kind of providence which followed a man throughout his life, and seldom forsook him; the latter was a spirit of divine warning in times of crisis. Nature was, however, so crowded with irresistible forces that in his helplessness the worshipper used an old formula which embraced them all—"Diique omnes cælestes vosque terrestres vosque inferni audite" (Hear us, ye gods of the upper air, of the earth, and of the under-world!) The Roman was specially impressed by the fertility of the earth and the mysterious processes of germination. His belief in immortality may have been quickened by his observation of the life of seeds. For, since the

earth was the great seed-bed, endlessly opulent, the belief that the sources of life and eternity lay far beneath became irresistible. Strange ritual gradually gathered round the ideas of growth and reproduction. There was a god of gardens, whose dark shrine lay covered by a mask of flowers—flame-coloured violets, drowsy saffron poppies, and clusters of red grapes. But amid the perfume of apples and of ripe grain there was also the sinister perfume of the blood of a victim, and hidden among the flowers was the god's dark symbol, a cross. The great forces of passion, *dux vitæ dia voluptas*,[1] that Venus whose name was no more Latin than Sanskrit (*vênâs*, dear and desirable), and all the other deep symptoms of human unrest, received the most vivid expression in those ancient creeds. Beauty and terror were strangely mingled. And sometimes when we study their haunting mythologies we feel as if, having pushed aside a rich, heavy branch of perfumed blossom, we suddenly discovered a corpse beneath it. In Roman as in Greek religion there was a ghostly and a ghastly element. The gods of the upper air are more benign, but a menace always comes from underneath. Such a combination of words as Jupiter Lapis proves how long the human mind lay entangled in the monstrous net of barbarism. In all old religions most of the gods had originally two aspects, which gradually fell asunder and were separately deified as rivals. Just as Christ combats Antichrist, so Jove had his anti-Jove, Vediovis or Vejovis, who played in the Rome of the Tarquins and of the Republic the part which the devil played in the Rome of the Middle Ages. This distrust of destiny and "fearful looking for of judgment" is, indeed, the fundamental theme in the history of all religions. For religion has often made God a misanthropist. In the

[1] *De Rerum Natura*, ii. 172.

Roman formula for the opening of prayer—"Be thou god or goddess, male or female, or if there is any other name whereby thou desirest me to call upon thee"—what blind gropings of the human spirit are manifest!

15. The religious ideas of the modern are so fundamentally opposed to those of the ancient world, that when we ask what was the influence which such a religion as Rome's, for instance, had upon Roman character, we are presented with a very interesting but a very difficult problem. Whereas, in the opinion of Æschylus, his religion, in spite of the fantastic robe which it wore, possessed the deepest moral value both for the individual and the State, in the opinion of Lucretius that same religion was the enemy not merely of truth but of morals and of reason.[1] He wrote his great poem with the express purpose of denouncing it and delivering men's minds from its thraldom. In his own wonderful phrase, which he is never weary of repeating or his reader of hearing, he looked beyond "the flaming walls of the world" (*flammantia mœnia mundi*) and found no gods.[2] He who had a scientific if not a materialistic explanation not merely for the outer world of matter, which he believed was eternal, but for that inner world of the soul which, he tells us, should be holier than any temple of any Apollo, turned with scorn from fairy-tales of the heavens. He asks a startlingly modern question, which would have sounded strange to the astronomers of Babylon—"How does the ether feed the stars?"[3] And he turns with contempt from gods who were helpless to prevent even their own bronze statues from being gradually worn away by the kisses and the touch of their

[1] I. 62 *sqq.* *Cf.* i. 81, 82.

[2] "Illud item non est ut possis credere, sedes
Esse deum sanctas in mundi partibus ullis"—(v. 146 *sqq.*).

[3] "Unde æther sidera pascit?" (i. 231).

devotees in the streets.[1] Thus the greatest intellect in Latin literature found no help in Latin gods. We wonder how far the unbelief had spread. Lucretius and the Illuminati of Cæsar's age were doubtless considered by humbler folk to be dangerous infidels. Even the more timid and conventional Virgil, who saw signs in the sun,[2] hesitated as to whether belief in the gods or pure rationalism was wiser for mortal men.[3] And yet it is impossible to believe that he and the other three deepest minds which Rome produced—Lucretius, Tacitus, and Juvenal—were altogether unaffected by the beliefs of their childhood. In the case of Lucretius, his flaming scepticism rather indicates that sense of spiritual loss and longing which in modern times is considered almost to have the value of a faith. In the case of Tacitus, a religious and even a superstitious bias is more easily seen. In a remarkable passage in which he refers to the religion of Israel he notices with respect, and almost with reverence, its tenacious monotheism.[4] And in another there are signs of a relation between his own religion and his moral convictions. He is painting the guilt of Nero, whose first attempt at matricide has failed. The crime was to have taken the form of drowning Agrippina in the Bay of Baiæ. But, says Tacitus, the gods, as if to render the attempt impossible, because too visible, made the sea that night never so calm and the sky never so bright with stars. When at last the imperial murderer has done his work by other means, Tacitus lifts the veil upon the human conscience, and we see a horror-struck man fleeing from the sinister place, pursued by hallucination and by the sound of a mysterious trumpet of judgment blown in the hills. Likewise, and

[1] I. 316. [2] *Georg.*, i. 463. [3] Ibid., ii. 490 *sqq.*

[4] "Judæi mente sola unumque numen intelligunt; profanos qui deûm imagines mortalibus materiis in species hominum effingant" (Hist., v. 5).

lastly, in the case of Juvenal, who subjected the same era to his furious diagnosis, we become aware of a mind overwhelmed by the sense of human wrong. And he, too, turns from the shallow civilisation of his own time to consider the ancient solemnities.[1]

16. Now, it is difficult for us to understand how a bizarre mythology was capable of creating the moral ideals of such men, but it is clear that there must have been some relation between Roman religion and Roman practical life. We have the testimony of Polybius, who, in the same passage in which he treats of the religion of the Romans, pays a great tribute to their honesty. He tells us that in the Rome which he knew—and he knew it well—it was a rare thing to find a dishonest man in the public service. And he explains the generally high moral tone of the commonwealth by the fact that religion was "used as a check on the common people." We are inclined to think, however, that the character of the best Romans was influenced not so much by the conventional religion of the State, *i.e.* by Jupiter and the other deities, as by the religion of the home. The two sets of ideas were utterly different. The Roman family was a true *imperium in imperio.* Every citizen, as we have said, was priest in his own house, and every house was a temple. But it was a temple dedicated to the dead. The household gods, Lares and Penates—for they appear to have been worshipped together—were the departed spirits of ancestors who continued to watch over the dwelling. Their images surrounded the *atrium*, or living-room, in which the family assembled to do them honour every day. The State was excluded from

[1] "Templorum quoque maiestas præsentior et vox
Nocte fere media mediamque audita per urbem,
Litore ab oceani Gallis venientibus et dis
Officium vatis peragentibus"—(xi. 111 *sqq.*).

this private chapel, because the State possessed its own hearth and its own Lares and Penates. The word Penates is specially significant, for whereas Lar means generally a protecting spirit or overlord, Penates means "the hidden gods," "the gods of the interior," to whom the household looked for its maintenance. The conception of the Roman home is full of grandeur. The altar, Vesta, round which the images of forefathers were grouped and before which the family uttered its prayers, was the real strength of the State. It was placed in the centre of the house in order to be hidden from the eyes of strangers. The fire which burned upon it had been burning for generations, and woe to the house whose sacred fire was allowed to go out. This symbol of the home, Hestia among the Greeks, Vesta among the Romans, marked a great epoch in the history of man. We saw that the early Aryan conquerors of India had likewise a great god of fire, Agni. Vesta and Hestia are both connected with an old Sanskrit root which means "fixed," something that has an unchanging dwelling-place. Vesta is thus a humanised Agni who has come to dwell under man's roof-tree. In every sacrifice the prayers were first offered to the family fire, which was the symbol of that fire of life which had been handed on from generations. There was thus an intense consciousness of the possession of a common family character and of the need of keeping it pure and strong. It was a wonderful means of compelling the individual to submit to the ennobling doctrine of *noblesse oblige.* For surely it is part of the solemnity of our lives that the graves of our forefathers must be the foundations of all our building. When the head of a Roman household died the images of his ancestors were carried to his funeral, and their noble acts were recited in so imposing a way that we have been told

that there was no more inspiring spectacle for a young Roman of noble ambition. It is, therefore, in such usages as these that we discover the real strength of Roman religion, and we refuse to believe that they had no influence even on the great mind of a man like Lucretius. Old writers used to say that the Romans worshipped only success, because they raised more altars to Fortune than to any other god. It would be pleasant, however, to accept a modern view according to which *Fortuna* had originally nothing to do with windfalls or the idle expectation of luck. It has been suggested that *Fortuna* is connected not so much with *fors* as with *fortis*, "the steadfast," "the brave," and *fortis* came straight from *fero*, which means "to carry burdens," or "to endure." If so, our old English proverb, "Fortune favours the brave," expresses the original Roman ideal, which even the Romans forgot. But they had many other words whose braver meanings became gradually obscured. For instance, their *opes*, riches, was only another form of *opus*, work. The best individual *optimus* was the man who worked most, and he was *fortunatus* because he was *fortis*. It is in such words as these that we discover the true biography of the Roman greatness.

17. Strange as it may sound, there was the closest relation between the religion of the Roman household and the ownership of property. A hearth, or in other words a fixed abode, was indispensable if the worship of ancestors was to be continued. When that worship ceased the household was in immediate peril. The real difference between patrician and plebeian was that whereas the former was able the latter was unable to trace his ancestry. Originally, in fact, the plebeian was a kind of Roman Sudra, an outcast from the clans (*gentem non habet*). If he possessed a hearth there were no images round it,

and it had no symbolic meaning. The plebeian marriage was described by the patricians in the most contemptuous language.[1] For of all Roman institutions marriage was the most sacred. In order to be valid in the patrician's view, it required to be witnessed at the household altar by the household gods. This family altar, transmitted from one generation to another and holding a fire which had been lit by ancestors who had been dead for centuries, was the central and the most impressive fact in the life of a Roman burgess. Hence the isolation and independence of each hearth imply that we are face to face with a society in which private property had been already long established. There was a god, Terminus, known to the Greeks and in some form even to the Hindus as well as to the Romans, and he was the god of boundaries. We may call him the god of property —a modern god—the only god who has received uninterrupted worship. According to old Roman law, the man who removed a boundary stone was, together with his cattle, forthwith to be put to death. In the Twelve Tables the most rigorous provision is made for the security of property. The owner of a tree, for instance, is to be allowed to gather the fruit which has fallen into his neighbour's garden. He who sets fire to a building shall be burned. The night thief is to be killed in the act. The view, however, that private ownership in land, as well as in other kinds of property, was characteristic of every Aryan community, even in its most primitive stage, is incorrect.[2] On the contrary,

[1] "Connubia promiscua habent more ferarum."

[2] Fustel de Coulanges (*La Cité Antique*, p. 62) says that "Les populations de la Grèce et de l'Italie, *des l'antiquité la plus haute* out toujours connu et pratiqué la propriété privée. Il n'est resté aucun souvenir historique d'une époque où la terre ait été commune." Both statements, for reasons already given, are inadmissible. *Cf.* Ihering, "The Evolution of the Aryan," p. 48; Pais, *Storia*, i. 574; Mommsen, "History of

co-ownership appears to have been the rule and not the exception among the clan villages of the Aryan stocks. Even among the Latin tribes land was at first held in joint possession by groups. That private wealth consisted not in land but in cattle is held to be proved by many facts, but especially by the fact that cattle was made the basis of value, and that the word for it, *pecunia*, was transferred to the symbol of exchange. We saw that among the Aryans of India the earliest struggle was for cattle. That was an echo of nomadic times during which there was no tillage. Although, of course, cattle required pasture, the herds of a mobile community must have been driven together and allowed to feed on a temporary common land. The use of the word "common" for public ground in England is a sign of immemorial collective rights. As soon, however, as a people like the Latins became settled, the value of the land was immediately discovered, and as the community added to its numbers that value was heightened. The man whose family was larger, whose cattle multiplied more than his neighbour's, would require more land. Perhaps it was felt that he was usurping too large a share of the common pasture, and herein we may discover a reason for its distribution in equal parts. In this manner the idea of property became enlarged. Wealth was no longer cattle merely, but cattle *plus* land. And yet for a lengthened period even arable land was tilled in common and the harvest was divided. When and for how many reasons allotments were made we have no means of knowing. As population increases the pressure of many economic causes begins to be felt, and communism becomes impracticable. Among the Romans the tradition was that

Rome," i. 85; Maine, "Ancient Law," p. 260. In *Questions Historiques* the author appears to be less dogmatic. "Conclurons nous qu'il n'y eut jamais nulle part aucune communauté de terre? Nullement" (p. 115).

Romulus, the founder of the city, had given about an acre and a quarter of land to each burgess. But it is supposed that this distribution referred only to building ground, and that the domain lands continued to be administered collectively. In any case, the separate ownership of house property meets us at the foundation of the city (753 B.C.), and no doubt it existed long before that date. There is a remarkable provision in the Twelve Tables in which must have been incorporated much old Latin usage along with new ideas. In Table VII. it is enacted that a space of two and a half feet must be left between every house. In other words, the great era of Roman individualism had begun. Each man was lord in his own house, and the images of his ancestors were gradually accumulated round the hearth fire. We shall probably not be wrong if we suppose that the choice of building materials had also an influence in developing ideas on property. The substitution of houses of brick and of stone for the frail huts of wood and straw of an earlier time must have brought a sense of permanence. Such buildings could be occupied by one generation after another, and at last it would be felt that without property the family would perish. The argument against certain kinds of socialism has thus a deep historical basis. The more durable materials were perhaps at first used in constructing the temples of the gods, which were the property of the State. For, as we saw, the State also possessed its Lares and Penates, who, together with Terminus, watched over its lands and its harvests. But if those gods were benign they would grant increase of property and of revenue. Terminus would at least be willing to have his boundary stones moved outwards to become the marks and frontiers of an ever-widening area of harvest land. Here, therefore, we find the relation between the internal and the external history of

a State like Rome. It was natural that the founders of those early commonwealths should have been tempted to extend the limits of a territory which they would ultimately share. It was this idea which really lay behind the Roman conquest. The public land was called *ager Romanus*, the land of the Romans. In the olden time it comprised only a small area. But gradually it grew and grew until, after a series of successful wars, all Italy became the Roman land, and then all the world. The history of Rome is nothing but the history of two great parallel struggles: (1) the struggle of the State to increase its domains—for, after all, Empire is only property on an immense scale; and (2) the struggle of the sons of the State against each other to secure a share of that property.

18. No people ever had clearer ideas on conveyancing than the Romans; although, indeed, it must be confessed that the chief part of their conveyancing was done on the battlefield and by the sword. There was at least no hypocrisy in their theory of property. The lance or spear was the symbol of possession, and it was actually brought during litigation into the law courts. The Roman felt no scruple in attacking the property of his enemy,[1] and he showed equal vigour in defending his own. With that startling brevity of language in which the force of Roman character is often made almost visible, the early law informs us that "against every enemy the right of possession is eternal."[2] Property was then, as indeed it still is, so obviously the result of successful combat that the Latin word for it, *mancipium*, means "that which has been seized by the

[1] "Maxime enim sua esse credebant quæ ex hostibus cepissent."

[2] "Adversus hostem æterna auctoritas" (Twelve Tables, vi. 5). The legal interpretation of the phrase is that no foreigner shall acquire title by possession to the property of a Roman citizen.

hand." And we are startled to find that that too was the technical word for slave. The official title of the Roman people, *Populus Romanus Quiritesque*, or *Populus Romanus Quiritium*, has been understood by many writers to mean a community held together by the spear. And the spear was not only the symbol of property. It played its part in the marriage ceremony as a sign that the future husband had captured his bride, and that the future father would be omnipotent in his own home. It was this sense of the need of rigorous and definite relationships in all the affairs of human life which made the Romans such masters in law that the world has since been living on their maxims. Imitators, and often poor imitators, in the region of æsthetics, in art, in literature, and even in religion, they were deeply original in the creative instincts of practical life. It would perhaps be too much to say that the submission of the individual to the State, which was involuntary in Babylon, became voluntary in Rome, since Rome suffered from a deep political unrest. But we must distinguish between a Roman's conception of the State and his impatience with particular governments. It was precisely the prolonged inner struggle which developed his political instincts and made him capable of governing himself and other men. It is easy, however, and perhaps too easy, to idealise the Roman character. The opinion of Montesquieu, that Roman ambition was centred not on wealth but on glory, is a rhetorical overstatement.[1] Apart from the fact that the soldiers of Sulla and of Cæsar, like the soldiers of Napoleon, fought not so much for a country as for a leader and for plunder, we detect even in the earliest policy of Rome, when none but her own burghers formed the army, as much

[1] *Considérations sur les Causes de la Grandeur des Romains et de leur Décadence*, p. 19.

"avarice" as in the policy of Carthage. For Rome, like Carthage, was a commercial State, and the wealth of both was the fruit of aggression. No people ever made shrewder use of their enemies and of their allies than the Romans. They never carried on two wars at one time, and when it was convenient they converted allies into enemies and enemies into allies. They knew how to perpetuate feuds between powers which in combination would have become too formidable. They posed as the protectors of Greece against Carthage. As soon, however, as Carthage was ruined Greece was attacked. There is nothing so logical as the calendar of Roman conquests. It contains a chronology of inevitable events. Greece was conquered, and immediately made an avenue towards the East. For when in despair the Ætolians called for help to that Asia which Greeks had vanquished, Rome transferred the battlefield from Europe to Asia as easily as she had transferred it from Italy to Africa. Antiochus was crushed by the help of Rhodes, and then Rhodes was crushed. One by one the peoples of the world were drawn into the wide net of dominion. And when we remember that a rehearsal of this empire had taken place in Italy, which had been for centuries the military manœuvre ground of Rome, we become aware of the vast continuity of Roman policy. In Italy alone Rome signed more than a hundred treaties, and doubtless they were all deposited in the shrine of Fides Romana on the Capitol. Yet in the end it was as if they had never been made. No doubt the more immediate Latin communities received special privileges from their union with Rome, but union was compulsory. And just as all the dialects of the Italian peoples gave way before the dialect of Rome, so their political systems were one by one expunged. It was really this conflict in Italy, and especially with men of their own race like

the Samnites, which created the military strength of the Romans. The greater the difficulty which they found in defeating an enemy, the more they considered him worthy to be absorbed by them. It has been said that, like Great Britain, Rome owed her power to this incorporation of diverse virile national elements. The struggles between Normans and Anglo-Saxons, between Anglo-Saxons and the Scotch, the Welsh, and the Irish, were, indeed, similar to those which raged between Rome and her Italian enemies. It is very remarkable that whereas Rome was occupied during five centuries in the conquest of Italy, her conquest of the world, as Polybius points out with astonishment, was completed in less than fifty-three years. But those five centuries involved the sternest education. The Roman Legion may have been founded on a Doric model, but the Romans utilised the military science of the Greeks much as the Japanese to-day have utilised the civil and military methods of Western civilisation. The training of the Roman foot-soldiers was very arduous and almost crushing, but it made them so formidable that they were considered to be equal, man for man, to fully equipped cavalry. In the manœuvres during peace they were compelled to carry arms double the weight of those which they carried in war, and they displayed extraordinary endurance on the march. And yet it was only in minor battles on the soil of Italy, in skirmishes between Romans, Samnites, and Etruscans regarding such matters as the possession of salt-pools and the traffic in salt, which in the picturesque phrase of the day was called "the holy ice of Neptune," it was in the hand-to-hand combat of burghers fighting for a territory not larger than a parish, that the Roman military genius and valour were first displayed.

19. Whereas in her foreign policy Athens supported

all the democratic States, Rome, on the contrary, supported the aristocracies. She profited by the revolutions in rival cities, and in spite of her own war of factions her greater stability attracted powerful families like the Sabine Claudii, who threw in their lot with her. Veii, once her most dangerous neighbour, overthrew its oligarchy, and Rome attacked it. The other Etruscan oligarchies left Veii in the lurch, and Veii fell. The same thing happened in Capua. Even in Carthage the aristocracy was eager for peace with Rome, and actually ready for submission. And when, after Carthage had been humbled, the Romans were free to march through Greece, the Hellenic aristocracies likewise opened their gates to them. No more striking testimony could have been paid to the administrative ability of the Roman Senate. But this foreign policy was only the counterpart of a policy pursued at home with relentless persistence. The Senate which was willing to ally itself with the Senates of foreign nations was determined to be master of its own mob. Hence those perpetual *certamina domi*, or domestic quarrels, to which Livy looks back with a kind of retrospective anxiety. A dogmatic pronouncement, however, on the morality of Roman politics would be misleading; for the political history of Rome, as of every other State, is full of contradiction. There were great men and great patriots in the aristocracy. Only an ignorant demagogism, for instance, will prevent us admitting that many a time the action of the Senate was full of patriotism, and that without the Senate there would have been no Rome. Those patricians who supposed themselves to be senators by divine right were, after all, often, although not always, worthy of their immense privileges. Many of them fought the battles of the State. By the mere fact that they were the wealthiest men they were compelled to take their places

in the *classis*—that is to say, in the four first ranks of the Roman Legion. And, on the other hand, when at last the people overcame the Senate we cannot absolve *them* or their formidable representatives, the tribunes, from the equal charge of proposing mere class legislation. At first a weapon of defence, the tribuneship soon became a weapon of attack. Not content with the compromise that one consul should be a patrician and the other a plebeian, the plebs insisted that both should be plebeians, and that the censorship, the prætorship, and the quæstorship should likewise be taken out of the hands of the patricians. It is as if a modern Labour Party, or any other single group, were to monopolise the government of a modern State, and to seize a kind of political throne.

20. The political history of Rome during the Kingship, the Republic, and the Empire is the history of three attempts to combine forces which were organically incapable of combination. There is no truth in the paradox of Machiavelli[1] that it was this disunion which saved Roman liberty. For if that were true, since the disunion never ceased, that liberty should never have been lost. As we shall see presently, it was never even gained by the vast population by whose industry Rome subsisted. Moreover, within the restricted sphere in which liberty *was* enjoyed it was always in danger. No doubt the creation of tribunes was the result of the long duel between the patricians and the plebs, but it was precisely that duel which brought on the political deadlock which ruined the State. For on the top of it came that series of military adventurers, such as Marius, Sulla, and Pompey, who prepared the way for the tyranny. Those inner oscillations were necessary for the political education of the Roman as of every other people, but we

[1] *Discorsi*, i. 3.

must be careful in using the word liberty in connection with a system in which so few men were free. During the Kingship the task was to discover an equilibrium between king, Senate, and people, but by means of a revolution which was essentially aristocratic the Kingship was overthrown. During the Republic the task was to make the discord between the Senate and the people [1] an accord, but even after the Senate had ceased to be exclusively composed of patricians, which was probably about 400 B.C.,[2] no accord came. The struggle was prolonged by a tenacious aristocracy long after many of its most powerful families had become extinct. It is a remarkable fact that out of fifty-three *gentes* whose members had exercised magisterial office in the fifth century, only twenty-nine in the fourth and only sixteen in the second century had representatives in the Senate. Now, this fact had important results for the plebs. All patricians, or *cives optimo jure*, had originally dependent upon them great numbers of "clients." Those men and their families were descended either from slaves manumitted in an earlier generation, or from foreigners or poor citizens who had placed themselves under the protection of a powerful house. But when the house had fallen the great number of its dependants were thrown upon their own resources. The lower ranks of Roman society were thus receiving, as indeed the lower ranks of every modern society also receive, a continual detritus from the higher levels. The view according to which the plebs were the descendants of the various Italian peoples who had been conquered by Rome is not inconsistent with the theory that their numbers were increased by the adhesion of impoverished clients. The

[1] The Latin word *populus* embraced patricians as well as plebeians but we use the word in the modern sense to include the whole nation.

[2] Willems, *Le Sénat*, i. 37.

day arrived, indeed, when the political interests of both parties became united. And yet, although the people steadily gained certain rights, organised themselves under the presidency of their tribunes, abolished the old law according to which marriage between a patrician and a plebeian was forbidden, appointed their own magistrates, forced an entrance into the Senate, and exercised legal and legislative power in their assemblies, their victory did nothing to solve the social and political problems of Rome. In the end patricians and plebeians, who had not known how to co-operate, alike succumbed to a military dictatorship which was the first stage of the Empire. And then at last, during the Empire, there was a return to monarchy in such a way that a republican system which, in some respects, had been characteristically European made way for the old system of Asia.

21. We are not here concerned, however, with the politics of Rome. In their general outline many great historians have made them sufficiently clear. And, after all, what does it matter whether the tribunes, who were at first excluded from the Senate, were later allowed to sit on a bench near the door, and then at last on a bench in the very middle of that holy of holies of the capitalists? Even although their triumph had been greater than it was, it could have done nothing to save Rome. In fact, the internal history of Rome provides the best instance of the sterility of politics. A political agitation which had lasted for seven hundred and fifty years ended in the extinction of the system for which the struggle had been made. We are told by one who knew everything about Roman politics that even during the Republic the people possessed little power. Theoretically they could not hold a public meeting without permission of the Senate.[1] And St. Augustine main-

[1] Cicero, *De Rep.*, ii. 32.

tained that Rome had never been a republic at all, because justice had had no place in it.[1] If, therefore, justice lived a precarious life even on the level of recognised rights, what strange chaos of wrong must have existed among the slaves who were crowded upon the lowest strata of the State? In other words, the political struggle went on above the heads of the slaves, and no matter what the issue might have been, it is certain that it would not have brought *them* any shadow of rights. The Roman, like the Athenian democracy, was hostile to the claims of the slaves. This fact, therefore, tends to diminish our sympathy with the plebs, whose political shibboleths, important as they doubtless are in the history of liberty, have been re-echoed with sufficient enthusiasm. After all, the plebs were freemen. The gulf which separated them from the slaves was impassable, compared with the more easily bridged distance between the plebs and the patricians. A national crisis, a foreign war, or a rising of the slaves served to unite the two orders. They might quarrel over the adjustment of their respective rights, but they were both determined to grant no rights to the slaves. A comfortable plebs would thus have been only a paltry result after centuries of agitation, especially when beneath the plebs there would have continued to exist a very unhappy and uncomfortable servile population. The shrewdest minds had, indeed, early perceived where the real problem lay. The agrarian laws, although proposed in the interest of the plebs, were of the utmost importance to the slaves. For the attempt to resist the vast concentration of land in the hands of a few capitalists involved the restriction of servile labour.

[1] "Nunquam illam (*i.e.* Rome) fuisse rempublicam, quia nunquam in ea fuit vera iustitia" (*De Civ. Dei*, ii. 21). St. Augustine is here quoting a lost passage of Cicero.

The famous Licinian law, supposed to have been passed about 367 B.C., enacted not merely that no one should be allowed to possess more than three hundred acres of land, but that the employer of labour should be compelled to reduce the number of his slaves in favour of freemen. Now, it is very remarkable that the period during which this law was enforced was the most flourishing period of Roman agriculture. It was obeyed by all the best leaders of the Republic—Manius Curius, Fabius, and the two Scipios. That was also the period of Rome's greatest vigour. On the other hand, when the Licinian laws, owing to the increasing corruption introduced by foreign conquest, were allowed to fall into abeyance Roman agriculture declined. Thus the struggle of the smaller proprietors against the great landlords was a thoroughly national struggle. But it was more. Although, no doubt, it was the movement only of a single class determined upon the maintenance of its own interests, it was nevertheless unconsciously a struggle on behalf of the slaves. The land, even in the days of the Republic, was in the hands of a capitalistic group.[1] Foreign conquest had no doubt brought a great influx of wealth, but also a great influx of slaves. The slave-market was overstocked. Labour had thus become so cheap that the freeman was no longer able to compete against the slave, and the capitalist made sure that only slaves were employed. For whereas freemen were liable to military service, slaves were exempt. Their employment, therefore, meant an enormous gain to the capitalist; but the greater their number, and the cheaper their price, the worse their treatment.

22. Here again, however, we are met by the fact that the triumph of the small landowners would not have solved the economic problem of Rome. The slave-market

[1] Appian, *Bell. Civ.*, Bk. I. ch. i.

would still have been full. The struggle for the land, indeed, like the struggle for liberty, was not altogether so heroic as it seems. For, to begin with, in order that Romans should possess it, whole nations had been dispossessed all over the world. We hear, for instance, that six Roman grandees owned half of the Africa which was known to Nero's age.[1] The transformation of the world into the *ager Romanus* had involved the displacement of countless thousands of human beings. And besides, even although the land had been divided never so justly between patricians and plebs, not an inch would have been allotted to the slaves who, by forced labour upon it, had increased and in some cases had created its value. We see, therefore, that in order to understand the real condition of Rome it is necessary to disentangle her social from her purely political history. Not in the two upper layers, but on the lowest layer of her society are to be found the deeper causes of her decay. It was tragic that, both under the Republic and under the Empire, the middle class was annihilated, and that the bourgeois became a beggar. But it is not by the study of an arid political struggle that we shall know the real reason why in Rome men were cheap and wheat was dear. Moreover, in the study of the lowest strata of Roman society we discover the real continuity of Rome. Whereas the political structure of the State was frequently and violently changed, its social basis remained permanent, and created during centuries the same economic results. The only difference between the earlier and the later period was that as the State grew older and more luxurious the number of slaves was enormously increased.

23. Rome drew her slaves from two sources, one internal and the other external, but during her early

[1] Pliny, N. H., xviii. 7.

period neither of those sources was prolific. Since her territory was limited she had little need of slaves. For she was practically surrounded by a ring of hostile cities, and until she had burst the ring she found it difficult to support even her own freemen. The land, divided into allotments, was tilled by the farmer and his sons. But it is precisely within the Roman family that the signs of slavery are first visible. The authority of the father (*patria potestas*) was so unlimited that it involved the power of life and death over his offspring. According to the early law, he possessed the right not merely of enslaving his son, or of selling him as a slave, but of killing him. Even when the son had reached a high social position and had become a public servant the parental control by no means ceased. And so far at least as the statute law was concerned this extraordinary authority remained unchallenged until the time of Alexander Severus. It is little wonder, therefore, that a Roman jurist remarked that in comparison with the Romans no people ever possessed such a power over their sons.[1] Like the slave, the son was incapable of holding property. If his father had sold him and the new master had bestowed freedom upon him, it was still in the father's power to sell him twice again. Even as late as the reign of Constantine a parent in destitution was permitted to dispose of his new-born infant, especially when the price received was required to pay the imperial taxes. In other words, the children of a Roman father formed part of the inventory of his property.

24. Owing to the law of debt, however, an even more serious wastage occurred in the ranks of Roman freemen. If after a delay of thirty days a debt remained unpaid, the debtor practically became the slave of his

[1] "Fere enim nulli alii sunt homines qui talem in filios suos habeant potestatem, qualem nos habemus" (Gai., i. 55).

creditor until the debt was liquidated. He was taken before the magistrate, and if no surety (*vindex*) came forward to guarantee the amount, the bankrupt was forthwith removed to the creditor's house, imprisoned there, chained, and loaded with shackles weighing not more than fifteen pounds. Thereafter he was publicly exposed during three consecutive market-days, and the amount of the debt was declared. But if his friends still refused to buy him off he was either killed or sold as a slave. It seems, however, that the creditor was compelled to sell the insolvent person "beyond the Tiber," since no man who had been a Roman citizen was to become irrevocably a slave on his native soil. Nevertheless, citizens who had been handed over or adjudged (*addicti*) to their creditors to work off debts gradually sunk into the last stages of subjection. In the case of a man who was in debt all round, his creditors were permitted by the ancient code to cut him in pieces and thus share their vengeance.[1] Some modern writers have doubted whether this barbarous law was ever carried out, but in a fierce age such reprisals cannot have been uncommon. Later, no doubt, it was found to be more profitable to sell the debtor, and his price was divided among the creditors. But it was precisely the rigour of those primitive laws which was responsible for the early tumults in Rome. The main causes which created ancient cannot have been different from those which create modern poverty, but in early Rome one cause was specially active, and it struck at the roots of national well-being. The burgher was called upon to fight his city's battles often at his own expense. For he was called away at the moment when he should have been tilling his own land, and this enforced neglect of his private fortune drove him to seek aid from usurers.

[1] Twelve Tables, iii. 6.

When he returned from war it was frequently to find himself in debt, and he was compelled to mortgage first his land and next his family, and at last himself. Hence it is easy to understand the words of Livy when he tells us that such men felt that their real enemies were *within* the walls of Rome.[1] That the state of affairs was intolerable is proved by the fact that those who had been momentarily set free to take part in a war were upon their return immediately handed over to their creditors. It was in this manner that a process of attrition went on in the ranks of the burghers, and that a discontented plebeian population began to form the majority in the State. The disproportion in fortunes became inevitable. No doubt the Lex Poetelia (326 B.C.) was a great reform, since, in order to save the freedom of a bankrupt citizen, it was enacted that not his person but his property was to be seized. Moreover, in the case where the debtor was absolutely insolvent the manner and the duration of his enslavement were henceforth to be regulated by jury. We do not know, however, how far this law was retrospective. Poverty had already become hereditary. Whole families had been mortgaged. Men lingered a lifetime in working off a debt, and the system was so profitable to the creditor that it was in his interest that the liquidation should be postponed. For as soon as satisfaction had been given the bankrupt was once more a freeman, and his land was his own again.

25. We thus see that from the beginning the three great problems of the Roman conquest, the Roman land, and Roman slavery were intricately entangled, and as Rome grew greater the entanglement grew worse. To those Romans who had lost their rights or whose rights were diminished there was added a vast servile popula-

[1] "Fremebant se foris pro libertate et imperio dimicantes domi a civibus captos et oppressos esse" (ii. 23).

tion recruited from the prisoners of war, who, if they could not ransom themselves, became slaves. Mommsen points out that the "glorious victories" of the Republic brought wealth. The victories may have been "glorious," but the wealth was fictitious. The revenue increased, but the small farmers disappeared, and the way was prepared for omnipotent territorial lords, and for an agrarian and industrial system which, wholly dependent on the labour of slaves, was the main cause of the ruin of Italy.

26. It was Italy which was Rome's first great slave-market, for the Romans did not scruple to place the yoke upon men of their own stock. In the Volscian war four thousand inhabitants of a single town were sold as slaves, and when the Samnites were defeated at Aquilonia the sale of more than thirty thousand of them helped to fill Rome's war-chest. In Epirus alone Paulus Æmilius took one hundred and fifty thousand prisoners, who were put up to auction, and the proceeds were divided among the soldiers. Slave merchants followed the armies, and sales on the battlefield were superintended by the military quæstors, who represented the State. It often happened that, owing to the number of prisoners, slaves were cheap. For instance, after the victories of Lucullus in Pontus the prisoners were sold for only four drachmæ. If we take the drachma as equal to the Roman denarius, that price was perhaps about four francs each. But the slave merchant on his arrival at Rome was able to resell the slave at a great profit. Often, indeed, the chief interest in a war centred upon the kind of slaves who would be brought to Rome. Thus we find Cicero in a letter to Atticus complaining that the slaves whom Cæsar would lead captive from Britain would be illiterate. Although Cæsar was content with only a few slaves for his own body-servants, it was often his boast that after his successful battles he had disposed

of thousands of slaves. On one occasion in Gaul he sold as many as fifty-three thousand. It would be tedious, however, to enumerate the hordes of captives who were put up to auction by victorious Roman generals. Rome inherited the slave-markets of the nations whom she conquered. Carthage, for instance, had been drawing her slaves out of inner Africa during many generations, but after her destruction that vast market was ceded to Rome. Greece and the Greek islands, which had been great centres of the traffic, became much frequented by the Roman slave merchants, since Greek slaves, owing to their intellectual attainments and their personal beauty, were specially prized. Corinth became a famous mart, and the island of Delos was capable of an average daily traffic in thousands of slaves. There was no part of the known world in Asia, Africa, and Europe from which captives were not despatched to Rome. Every new conquest opened up a new market. And when we remember that, owing to Rome's frequent neglect of her fleet, the Mediterranean, at least till the days of Pompey, swarmed with pirates, who did a great trade in kidnapping and sold their human cargoes at the Italian ports, we shall not be surprised to find that the slave-shops at Rome in the Via Sacra, the Via Suburra, and at the Temple of Castor were always busy.

27. The fact that at Rome there were no special market-days for buying and selling slaves, but that sales took place daily at various points throughout the city, proves how great and constant was her traffic in human beings. That traffic was under the immediate supervision of the ædiles, whose function it was to protect the interests not merely of buyers but of the State. A fiscal tariff on the sale of slaves formed part of the national revenue. There was an *ad valorem* duty on the import and the export, and during the reign of Augustus

a tax amounting to about four per cent. of the value was levied on every sale. The edicts of the ædiles regulated the traffic and guaranteed purchasers against fraud. The slave-dealers (*mangones*) were experts not only in preparing slaves for the various industries, but in improving their physical appearance. For although slaves were submitted naked for inspection, unwary buyers were often deceived by the tricks of the trade, and sometimes they sought the advice of veterinary surgeons, who pronounced upon the physical fitness of the individuals selected. The commoner kind of slaves were exhibited in gangs on special platforms in the market-place, while the finer and more valuable sort were kept in cages or wooden booths, where they could be examined minutely and at leisure by careful speculators. Those whose character could not be guaranteed wore a cap (*pileus*), and prisoners of war wore a crown. Such purchases were made at the purchaser's own risk. In every other case the law required a public declaration of the slave's character, and often a record of his conduct, written on a scroll, was hung round his neck so that intending buyers might read it. Before the moment of auction the slave merchant caused his slaves to display their strength in lifting heavy weights, in running, leaping, and, when possible, their accomplishments in reading and writing. The law required that the seller should declare the slave's nationality, and since there was no known country from which slaves were not forwarded to Rome, her market provided an object-lesson in ethnology. It was usual to sell the slave with the clothes which he wore and with a day's rations. The entire trade involved on the part of the merchants not only a deep knowledge of human nature but great caution, on account of the severity of Roman law in the case of fraudulent transactions. Thus an edict declares that the slave-dealer is required to inform

purchasers of the vices or diseases of the slave, and that if there has been concealment or intent to deceive the law shall protect the buyer.[1] If the slave did not answer to his description he was liable to be returned within six months after the purchase. The word *mangonizare* indicated the various artifices used by the slave merchants to make their human wares more attractive and to hide their defects. Since aged slaves were of no value, and were often only thrown into the bargain, means were employed to delay the age of puberty or to cause slaves to retain as long as possible the appearance of youth. Pliny, for instance, tells us of a certain woman who, with the resin of cedarwood, lead, and other strange prescriptions, professed to be able to make slaves cut a good figure on market-day. In order to disguise the leanness which was common among them, terebinth was often rubbed on their bodies, because it had the effect of relaxing the skin and causing the limbs to appear more robust.[2] The Romans, indeed, demanded from slaves physical, mental, and moral qualities which were seldom found even among freemen. How high the standard was may be measured by the fact that sometimes even after a year had elapsed since the purchase of a slave an indemnity could be demanded by a purchaser who had discovered that he had made a bad bargain. Defective eyesight or hearing, epilepsy, phthisis, varicose veins, the lingering traces of any disease, habits of idleness, fits of cowardice or of bad temper, a dull intelligence—in short, any physical, mental, or moral

[1] "Aiunt aidiles: Qui mancipia vendunt certiores faciant emptores, quid morbi vitiive cuique sit, quis fugitivus errove sit noxave solutus non sit; eademque omnia, cum ea mancipia venibunt, palam recte pronuntianto" (*Dig.*, xxi. 1, 1). "Causa hujus edicti proponendi est, ut occurratur fallaciis vendentium et emptoribus succurratur quicumque decepti a venditoribus fuerint" (ibid., xxi. 1, 2).

[2] "Ad gracilitatem emendandam" (N. H., xxiv. 22).

defect—gave the purchaser the right of cancelling the agreement. And it is profoundly significant that in Rome, as in Babylon, purchasers were specially warned against buying slaves who might be suffering from nervous diseases. Epilepsy was a common malady, and the fact is a startling proof of that destruction of the nervous system which slavery involved. One or two of the facts mentioned in the edicts or in the commentaries of imperturbable jurisconsults, who had an eye only for the legal aspects of those contracts of bondage, throw more light on the state of Roman slavery than any volume of statistics. Thus it is declared to be a fraud for a slave merchant to sell slaves who had ever attempted to commit suicide. In other words, suicide was regarded as a luxury reserved for freemen. The slave's life was precious to the master only because of its economic value as an instrument of labour. But it was to be an instrument endowed with automatic obedience. The most searching inquiries were made by slave-buyers as to any restive tendencies displayed by the new slave, and especially as to his record of attempts to escape. The letter "F" branded on the brow of a fugitive who had been recaptured meant that he would fetch the lowest price in the market. Even if, while on his master's errands, he was given to linger in the streets or on the fields, to look at pictures or at games, he was suspected of the vices of the fugitive, and unless a declaration of those latent symptoms was made by the seller the contract of sale could be declared void. In every case Roman law protected the buyer in the most minute degree. For instance, there was a constant demand for robust slaves, but they must not be too robust. It was declared to be a fraud to offer for sale a slave who had the courage to fight wild beasts in the arena, for he might prove to be too formidable a servant. Such a decree shows

how unnatural and precarious were the relations between master and servant at Rome. Finally, when we are told that according to Roman law it was a fraud to offer for sale in the Roman slave-market a slave who was given to "melancholy,"[1] and that the purchaser was entitled to damages, we are brought face to face with the paradox of a system of justice founded on so unjust a basis.

28. The private slaves were divided into two great classes, (1) *familia rustica* and (2) *familia urbana*, according as they worked in the country or in the town. In the earlier period, when life was simpler, there was no distinction between urban and rural slaves, and when the burgher came to town he brought his farm servants with him. But when Rome grew larger and life became more luxurious the division and subdivision of servile labour became more pronounced. It was not merely that the slave who served in a great house in the city was better educated, better fed, and better dressed than the country labourer, but that already during the last two centuries of the Republic special slaves performed in the wealthy houses functions which had hitherto been fulfilled by a single individual. For it is a mistake to suppose that the age of luxury began only with the Empire. Even in republican times agriculture, with all its accessory industries, was carried on by a great army of slaves, who had been mainly recruited from the defeated armies of the enemies of the Republic. Rural wealth, indeed, consisted in slaves as well as in cattle and land. The position of the slave who tilled the fields, dressed the vines, or drove the oxen of Italy could hardly be more clearly expressed than in the words of Varro. In a definition which is worthy of Aristotle he tells us that agricultural implements are divided into three classes—

[1] Paulus, *Dig.*, xxi. 1, 2. "Melancholia" sometimes meant insanity as well as bad temper.

(1) those which are articulate, that is to say, slaves; (2) those which are semi-articulate, such as oxen; and (3) those which are inarticulate, such as the waggon.[1] With that naïveté which startles a modern reader, Varro recommends that hired labourers, instead of one's own slaves, should be employed in the unhealthy districts; not, as some writers suppose, because of a humane interest in the slave's welfare, but for the shrewd reason that in case of death the loss would fall upon the owner of the hireling. And although he points out that liberal treatment is advisable, the motive is again economic, since thereby the slaves will be capable of still more labour.[2] Doubtless impoverished freemen sometimes hired themselves for farmwork, but they were an insignificant minority. When Cato says that a vineyard of 100 *jugera* demanded about sixteen labourers (*operarios*),[3] he means them all to be slaves. We are expressly told by another Roman writer on agriculture that the Italian vineyards were cultivated by slaves, and that it was found convenient to subdivide them into gangs of ten. Such slaves required to be specially intelligent and robust; but since these qualities would render them dangerous, and since vineyards were of great value, the vine-dressers were made to work in chains.[4] It is therefore no mere modern sentimentalism which lets us hear the actual clanking of chains amid the harvests and in the vineyards of ancient Italy, for in the pages of her most prosaic writers we read of peasants working shackled in the fields.[5] When we remember not only that the manual

[1] "Alii (*i.e.* scriptores) dividunt in tres partes, instrumenti genus vocale et semivocale et mutum, vocale, in quo sunt servi, semivocale, in quo sunt boves, mutum in quo sunt plaustra" (*De Re. Rust.*, i. 17, 2).

[2] "Studiosiores ad opus fieri" (ibid., i. 17, 7).

[3] *De Re. Rust.*, xi.

[4] Columella, *De Re. Rust.*, ix. "Ideoque vineta plurimum per alligatos excoluntur."

[5] *Cf.* Cato, *op. cit.*, lvi,

labour on the farm, the villa, and on the estates of the Roman grandee was performed by multitudes of chained men, but that the implements which they used had been manufactured and sometimes invented by their fellow-slaves who were kept at work in the shops and factories of the city, we see how wide was the ramification of the servile system. The vine-dresser (*vinitor*), the landscape gardener (*topiarius*), the shepherd (*pastor*), the digger (*fossor*), the reaper (*messor*), the ploughman (*arator*), the ox-driver (*bubulcus*), the goat-herd (*caprarius*), the swine-herd (*porcarius*), the rough-riders (*mansuetarii*), the poultry keeper (*gallinarius*), the hunter (*venator*), the dairyman (*lactarius*), and a hundred other indispensable farm labourers, were all slaves. The day came when the country gentleman employed a slave as wolf-killer (*luparius*), to drive the wolves from his estate when his own bow should have done the work. But the tools which were in the hands of all labourers—the ploughs, the spades, the hoes, the pruning-hooks for the vine, the shears, the waggons for harvest, the harness for horses and oxen, the bridles, even the whips which were used for oxen, horses, and men alike—were also the handiwork of slaves. A slave captain or overseer (*villicus*), who was himself a slave, was immediately responsible to the proprietor, and for purposes of discipline every estate possessed a prison or *ergastulum* in which disobedient slaves were punished.

29. In the city, however, there existed a far more elaborate organisation of servile labour. To make a list of the functions of the public and the private slaves of Rome would be to mention every industry and every luxury known to the ancient world. Artisans of every kind, household and personal servants, the attendants of the public baths, gardens, temples, and statues of the gods, and even the night watchmen, were slaves. Cooks

and bakers, barbers and footboys, shoemakers, carpenters, and smiths, jewellers and musicians, singers and dancers, all belonged with coachmen, boatmen, and gladiators to the class whom the Romans described as being possessed of no human rights. Although according to Roman law there was no real difference in the servile condition,[1] nevertheless some slaves were more fortunate than others, and there were grades of bondage. It was not only that those who were identified with the more luxurious habits of their masters were often in easy and even enviable circumstances, and enjoyed a prospect of early liberation denied to the dull mechanic who was chained in field or factory and laboured in his chains until death. In Rome, as in Babylon, slaves (*ordinarii*) were the owners of other slaves (*vicarii*). A slave, for instance, who practised economy in his daily rations was often able to buy another slave whom he compelled to share his labour, and often to perform the whole of it. For this reason it became later a great problem for the Roman jurists to decide whether the slave-master of a slave-master should not make the latter responsible for the acts of a slave of the second rank. The entire system thus involved an elaborate parasitism, and we may be sure that the greatest sufferings fell to the lot of those *mediastini*, mere creatures of muscle, who were too unintelligent and gross ever to be able to rise from the lowest steps of the long ladder of slavery. That minute subdivision of labour which was already in existence during the last two hundred years of the Republic became still more minute during the Empire, when Rome was hungering after the despotism and luxury of the East. The change in the habits of the people is well illustrated by the fact that whereas in the earlier period the visitor to a house gained admit-

[1] "In servorum conditione nulla est differentia" (*Inst. Just.*, I. iii. 5).

tance by knocking the hammer which hung at the door, in the later period he was admitted by a slave doorkeeper, who was perhaps chained to the door-post. If the house were a great one a numerous retinue would be found within it, for the social position of a citizen began to be measured according to the number of slaves whom he could afford to maintain in his town house and his country villa. In the case of the wealthiest men the two *familiæ* were kept distinct, and the style of elegant living which at length came into vogue in the city demanded well-trained and expensive slaves. Ostentation devised new functions for a hierarchy of superfluous attendants. The kitchen, the banqueting-room, and the bath had each a full staff, and special slaves were even appointed to guard and preserve those images of ancestors which were the mark of the family's greatness. We hear of handsomely dressed pages (*delicati*) and serving-men,[1] whose names form a weary list—carvers, cupbearers, anointers, bath-heaters, wardrobe keepers and toilet slaves, sandal and umbrella carriers, musicians, and even manicurists.[2] It is part of the irony of the system that the physicians, surgeons, and oculists were likewise slaves.[3] The education of Roman children was not conducted by freemen, for their nurses and tutors, both male and female, belonged to the servile class. Even adults became learned by proxy, and bought literary slaves, reciters of poems, librarians, secretaries, and musicians, who gave a refined tone to a house. When a rich Roman appeared in public he was preceded by numerous slaves (*anteambulones*) who prepared the way for him, and he was followed by another troupe (*pedisequi*), dressed in his

[1] Marquardt, *Das Privat Leben*, i. pp. 145 *sqq*. [2] Popma, 57.
[3] Pignorius, 70, 71. They often received great emoluments, however, and were generally liberated.

livery and ready to run his errands. His litter was carried by special bearers (*lecticarii*), whom fashion generally chose from Syria or Asia Minor. And at night his torch-bearers (*lampadophori*) made light for him through the lampless streets. Oriental methods were so closely mimicked that many a Roman grandee, like an Assyrian king, had his fly-flapper, fan-bearer, and food-taster. The bread he ate was baked by slaves with wheat which slaves had sown and reaped; the wine he drank came from vineyards in which slaves were the vine-dressers; the water for his bath was led through vast aqueducts which had been built by slave labour. Everything he handled had been manufactured by those "articulate implements," shipped to Rome in such abundance and replaced so easily as soon as they were worn out. His clothes and embroidered coverlets and his linen were woven and spun by unpaid spinners and weavers, and his furniture and porcelain were the handiwork of men whose only recompense was food; he listened to music and songs played and sung by slaves, and slaves even copied the books which he read. It is little wonder if the master of so many servants became incapable of doing anything for himself, if Roman character was at last mummified, and if so unnatural a divorce between capital and labour ended in the economic sterility of the State. The creative energies, the powers of invention and imagination, belonged only to the outcasts from law who, in a definition which was no doubt considered brilliant and epigrammatic in its day, were described as "almost a second race of men."[1]

30. There is nothing more remarkable in the history of ancient States than the fact that, in spite of this vast disproportion between those who had rights and those

[1] "Quasi secundum hominum genus" (*Florus*, iii. 20). The phrase was not meant to be contemptuous.

who had none, the ruling class were so long successful in their method of control. In the Rome of Cæsar's age four hundred and fifty thousand citizens were the lords of an empire at least seven times larger than modern France, and they governed it by means of a tyranny whose excessive weight reached far down, and was felt most heavily in the lowest social strata. Even although we were to accept the estimate of Gibbon, according to whom [1] the number of slaves of any period of Roman history probably balanced the number of freemen, it would still be remarkable that an equilibrium was so long maintained between social forces of such magnitude and so unnaturally adjusted. It is true that Rome did not escape the dangers of insurrections by her slaves, and a servile revolt invariably filled the city with excitement. But, on the whole, the insurrections were few, and the reason was that combination was rarely possible among a mass of human beings gathered from the ends of the world, speaking different languages, worshipping different gods, and no doubt often regarding each other with intense racial hate. As Rome grew greater their numbers increased. Recent investigators believe that the ancient accounts of those numbers were, on the whole, not exaggerated.[2] Exact calculations are of course impossible, but that the slave traffic was enormous is proved by the profoundly significant fact that in Rome capital at last found one of its best investments in slaves. An even more remarkable proof of the growth of slavery is that in the reign of Augustus a law was passed which forbade any citizen to liberate by his testament more than a hundred of his servants.[3] In other words, it cannot have been uncommon for a Roman citizen to possess many

[1] Ch. ii. [2] Marquardt, *Das Privat Leben*, i. 166.

[3] Gaius, *Inst.*, i. 43. "Sed præscribit lex, ne cui plures manumittere liceat quam C."

hundreds of slaves. We hear, for instance, that Scaurus numbered in his wealth more than four thousand, that Crassus possessed great gangs of them, that in the reign of Augustus a certain Cæcilius Claudius Isidorus left four thousand one hundred and sixteen,[1] and that in the reign of Nero in the house of the præfect of the city as many as four hundred were massacred at a stroke.[2] In the *columbaria* or tombs in the Via Appia and elsewhere belonging to the royal family the urns of thousands of slaves have been discovered. According to Plutarch, Cæsar once gave a gladiatorial show in which as many as six hundred and forty gladiators, who were all slaves, appeared, and the Emperor Trajan, during a carnival which lasted four months, sent ten thousand into the arena. Such facts indicate an inexhaustible market. When, too, we remember not only that slaves were being continually imported, but that, although legal marriage was forbidden to them, breeding was extensively encouraged, it will be no surprise to hear that in Italy freemen were outnumbered. If a man possessed no slaves it was a sign of his poverty, and the word *familia* was not given to a number less than fifteen. No doubt there were constant fluctuations in the supply and the demand, but it is admitted even by those who are most sceptical regarding ancient figures that, for instance, in the year 529 of the city the proportion of freemen to slaves was 27 : 22.[3] According to more recent calculations, when the free adult male population of Rome numbered 320,000 her slaves numbered 900,000.[4] Gibbon was inclined to believe that during the reign of Claudius Rome possessed throughout the whole of her empire, from the banks of the Euphrates in the east to the

[1] Pliny, "Nat. Hist.," xxxiii. 10. [2] Tacitus, *Ann.*, xiv. 43.
[3] Dureau de la Malle, i. 289.
[4] Marquardt, *Staatsverwaltung*, ii. 124.

waves of the Atlantic in the west, about 60,000,000 slaves.[1] So far, however, as Italy herself is concerned, it seems safe to suppose that at the beginning of the Empire her slaves numbered not less than 1,500,000.[2] It is true that during the Empire the free population was artificially increased by the grant of citizenship to foreigners and by the liberation of slaves. But for every slave who was liberated hundreds of new captives were introduced. It has been computed that in the reign of Augustus, Italy, from the valley of the Po southwards, contained about five and a half million inhabitants. The calculation appears to be too low; but no matter what was the figure which the census of Roman freemen reached, it was at least in the later period always more than balanced by the number of slaves.

31. The market prices of slaves were liable to the fluctuations which affected all other commodities. But it has been supposed that 500 drachmæ, or a little over £16, was an average price for an average slave during the Republic and the Empire. Owing to the differences between ancient and modern economic conditions, however, it is difficult to estimate the real cost of servile labour. Some writers suppose that from the second Punic war till the reign of Trajan the average price of agricultural slaves was as high as £80.[3] And according to Columella, who was writing in the age of Claudius, 8000 sestertii, which is about the same amount, were paid for a vine-dresser. Those who traded in slaves doubtless made large fortunes, but it is probable that servile labour often caused a loss to the employer. If it cost about £24 yearly to maintain a slave,[4] when work was scarce

[1] Ch. ii. According to Beloch, however, the *entire* population of the Roman world did not exceed 60,000,000 at the death of Augustus.
[2] Beloch, *Die Bevölkerung der Griechisch-Römischen Welt*, p. 436.
[3] Dureau de la Malle, i. 154. [4] Ibid., p. 150.

the owner who hired out his workmen had a poor return for his investment. Moreover, he was placed in the following dilemma. If he starved his slaves he would render them unfit for work and therefore for hire; if, on the other hand, he treated them liberally while there was little demand for their labour he would be ruined, or he might be compelled to sell them at a loss. During the Empire a mason could be hired for sixpence per day, a baker for about one shilling, a marble-cutter for one shilling and fourpence, and a carpenter for the same price as a baker. Thus when the supply of such workmen was greater than the demand for them, and when food was dear, the system was ruinous both to the slave and the slave-owner. It has been plausibly urged that in dull times the maintenance of a slave cost his master more than the maintenance of a modern servant. On the other hand, in the case of a scarcity in any special kind of labour the rate of hire could be raised and a large profit secured. Gladiators were sometimes hired for about twelve shillings per show, with a special indemnity in the case of their death. Pliny, in a picturesque comparison, informs us that at one time shield-bearers were sold cheaper than nightingales, and he knew of a case in which a white nightingale sold for 6000 sestertii, or about £60. The slaves of luxury were, of course, the most expensive, and we hear of enormous prices given by connoisseurs. Whereas, according to the slave tariff fixed by the Code of Justinian, a child below ten years was to be sold for about £6, a child over ten years for about double that amount, and a man of average accomplishments for about £30,[1] there are instances in which sums over £1000 were paid for handsome youths. Mark Antony, if Pliny is to be trusted, paid almost £2000 for two boys, and eunuchs

[1] Wallon, ii. 173.

sometimes brought fabulous prices. Skilled doctors also were sold at a high price in the slave-market, and those who had spent money on the education of all the finer sort of literary and artistic slaves made large profits on their investments. Actors and actresses, readers and grammarians, and men skilled in special arts such as painting, music, and dancing, were far beyond the reach of the ordinary buyer. The owner of such slaves treated them with the same care which he bestowed upon his racing stud. These more expensive slaves were brought into personal relations with their master, often succeeded in wringing great concessions from him, shared his luxury, and at last gained their freedom. But that the system in its economic aspect was full of risk to the speculators, and full of moral and physical ruin to the meaner sort of those on whose bodies the speculation was made, is proved by the fact that the average duration of the life of the average labouring slave is supposed to have been only about eight years.[1]

32. During a long period the authority of the Roman citizen within the walls of his own house was so absolute that the Roman State was really a collection of miniature monarchies. The Empire, indeed, was the last stage of the evolution of a social system which had been latent from the beginning. For the emperor was only the magnified form of the citizen, who was no less omnipotent within the restricted area of his own domain. Sometimes that area was by no means restricted in the case of the great landowners, who were also the owners of many hundreds of slaves. Within their territory no one questioned their rule. During many centuries there existed no relation between the public and the private

[1] Dureau de la Malle, i. 150. The average duration of the life of the miners in Laurion is supposed by some writers to have been only two years.

law of Rome, and all that took place behind the screen of domestic privacy was outside the jurisdiction of the courts. Within every house the house-father held his own assize, and beyond it there was no appeal. His power over his offspring was as great as his power over his slaves. He and only he was the rewarder of their deeds, the judge of their misdeeds and of the measure of punishment. If during the Empire this domestic tribunal began to lose much of its authority, the interference of the State was not at first due to any humane motives. Just as during the Middle Ages it was the shrewd policy of the sovereign to assist the villein against the feudal lord, so, it was in the interest of the Roman emperors to diminish the independent judicial powers of the haughty Roman citizen in order to reduce the entire people to a common level. The causes which brought about an amelioration of the condition of the servile classes were complex, and are difficult to disentangle. They were economic as well as political and religious. The work of reform was the result of a strange and unconscious alliance between the subtle diplomacy of the throne and the great new doctrine of Christ. The fact remains, however, that it was during the Empire that the burden of slavery was somewhat lightened, and it is sufficient to save us from the folly of supposing that, in a world in which *all* government so easily becomes misgovernment, men are necessarily free and happy under a republic. It was precisely during the victorious years of the Roman republic that the tyranny of the slave-owner became most formidable. It was not until the first century of the Empire, and probably in the reign of Nero, that a law was passed, Lex Petronia, which prohibited a master arbitrarily to hand over a slave to fight with the wild beasts (*ad bestias depugnandas*). Such early efforts in the cause of humanity were no doubt timid. For instance, in the

case in question, if the slave was found guilty by a judge the law acquiesced in the fearful punishment which the master had proposed, and the slave was duly thrown into the arena. Later came the far bolder and nobler legislation of men like Hadrian, Antoninus Pius,[1] and Justinian, and in some of their decrees we discover traces of the undoubted influence of the Gospel. The long delay of mercy and reform is to be explained by the Roman reverence for property which is the fetich of all law. According to the law of Rome the slave was not a person but a chattel. After his price had been paid his master possessed over him the right of use or of abuse, and until very late in the history of Rome the leg of a slave could be broken by his owner with as much impunity as the leg of a chair. No doubt it would be dangerous to generalise too much on the treatment of Roman slaves. That treatment varied from epoch to epoch, and in accordance with the temperaments and the tempers of the masters. In a history so dark with crime it is pleasant, for instance, to discover traces of a magnanimous spirit in a writer like Columella, or in the letters of the younger Pliny, who betrays a genuine sympathy with his own bondsmen. If, however, the mortality of slaves was great even when their master was a kind man like Pliny, who complains of losses,[2] we can imagine the huge waste of life which the whole system in its most violent aspects involved. That system, therefore, must be judged not by isolated instances of benignity or of malignity but by its broad results. During a banquet at which the Emperor Augustus was a guest a serving-man broke a crystal vase, and by way of punishment the host, Vedius

[1] Gaius, I. v. 3.

[2] "Confecerunt me infirmitates meorum, mortes etiam, et quidem iuvenum" (Ep. viii. 16).

Pollio, ordered the youth to be thrown into the great fish-pond to be devoured by monster eels. The youth fled to the feet of the emperor, and begged not for life but for another form of death. Augustus intervened, saved the slave's life, and ordered all the crystal in the house to be broken and the fish-pond to be filled up. Nevertheless, that same Augustus once nailed to the mast of a ship one of his own servants against whom he had a grudge. There is, indeed, abundant evidence to prove that slaves were frequently exposed to similar sudden outbursts of fury. A single sentence of Seneca indicates how precarious was their position, for he tells us that it was permissible to do anything to a slave.[1] In another passage he turns with disgust from "the vast subject," as he calls it. But, like Aristotle, he appears to have been fascinated by it, returns to it again and again, and in more than one epigram succeeds in blasting Roman character. He presents, for example, a vivid picture of a Roman grandee sumptuously dining before the night's revels properly, or rather improperly, begin. In the enjoyment of a degraded luxury the *viveur* is surrounded by a crowd of liveried slaves, any one of whom if he moves his lips (*movere labra*), or sighs, or even coughs, is instantly punished. Woe to the servant who, in the midst of a scene of gluttony,[2] is slow to understand his part in a ridiculous and laborious etiquette, or refuses to fulfil the office appointed for him in the programme of the night's debauch.[3] A long list of the instruments of punishment and torture indicates how formidable domestic service had become in the age of Roman splendour. Shackles for the hands and the feet,

[1] "Cum in servum omnia liceant" (*De Clem.*, i. 18, 2).

[2] Ep. xlvii.

[3] "Tota nocte pervigilat, quam inter ebrietatem domini ac libidinem dividit, et in cubiculo vir et in convivio puer est" (Ep. xlvii.).

scourges made of chains, knotted rods, whips and thongs loaded with lead and bronze or with pieces of sharp bone, a heavy iron collar to which the hands were fastened, and many other tools were used in a penal system which in many cases involved nothing less than the vivisection of its victims.[1] Their injuries became a matter of scientific interest to ancient physicians like Galen, who said that sometimes the eyes of slaves were put out, that the tongues of those who were talkative were removed, and that the legs of recaptured fugitives were broken.[2] Slaves suffered not only vivisection but vivicremation, for it was upon their bodies that, in the opinion of old writers, experiments in burning living men were first made. The usual mode, however, of carrying out their death sentence was crucifixion.

33. Perhaps the indifference with which their lives were regarded could not be better illustrated than by a passage of Cicero, who informs us that it had become a problem in ethics whether during a threatened shipwreck valuable horses or slaves should be sacrificed. For the vast majority of the Roman citizens of Cicero's age that problem had only a financial aspect, and he too admits that whereas feelings of humanity pointed to one solution of the problem, motives of economy suggested the other.[3] And this remark is valuable, because we thus learn that slaves in Rome, as in Babylon, were usually cheaper than horses. It had also become a question for the debating societies of the day whether during a scarcity of supplies a man's servants should be allowed to perish. The habit of looking upon them as creatures less than human is again strikingly shown in another

[1] Pignorius, p. 18 *sqq.*; Blair, pp. 63, 111, 229; Marquardt, *Das Privat Leben*, pp. 182 *sqq.*

[2] Pignorius, p. 18.

[3] "Hic alio res familiaris, alio ducit humanitas" (*De Officiis*, iii. 23).

passage in which Cicero, when writing to a friend, excuses himself and feels ashamed for having regretted the death of one of his own slaves.[1] That their death was not only not deplored, but compassed and hastened and made more frightful by the slave-owners of his own time, is proved by the speech in which Cicero informs the judges that a slave, who indeed had been condemned as a criminal, was not crucified before his tongue had been cut out in order that on the cross he might not divulge the crimes of his mistress.[2] In Rome there was no genuine asylum for the wretch who fled from such a fate. By a decree of the Senate, the sanctuary afforded by the temples and the statues of the gods was abolished, owing to the fact that criminals had taken advantage of the privilege. And although, later, fugitive slaves clung to the statues of the emperors, they found in these only a precarious refuge. The master waited until his fugitive was starved into submission, and then ensued either torture, administered by torturers hired for the purpose, or else death in the arena. The peculiar villainy of the corrupt public spirit of imperial Rome is seen in the fact that such deaths of captured fugitives formed special attractions as theatrical interludes and episodes during the shows of the wild beasts. Successful flight was, indeed, rarely possible. In the sacred name of property, Roman law did all in its power to assist the master in laying hands on the runaway, and any one who harboured him was guilty of crime. The State prisons were ready to receive the slave until such time as was convenient to hand him back for retribution in the domestic assize. Handbills with full descriptions of

[1] *Ad Att.*, i. 12. There is evidence that Cicero treated his own slaves —for instance, Tiro—with kindness and even affection (Wallon, iii. 16).

[2] "Nam Stratonem quidem, judices, in crucem actum esse exsecta scitote lingua" (*Pro Cluentio*, 67).

his age, appearance, and height were placarded in the public places, and, as in Greece, professional slave-catchers were soon on his track. Moreover, slaves who were suspected of the intention of escaping were compelled to wear irremovable metal collars, upon which the names and addresses of their masters were engraved. Many of those collars, made of lead or brass, have been discovered, and the following may be taken as a typical inscription: "Catch me, because I am trying to escape, and take me back to my master, Bonifacio, the linen weaver."[1] This label is specially interesting, because at the end it contains the name and symbol of Christ, "Alpha, Christus, Omega." Since these words appear immediately after the name of the slave-owner, it is certain that he, and not the slave, was a Christian. The surveillance of fugitives must have been vigilant, because there is a case in which a slave who had fled to Africa—the great mother of slaves—was pursued and brought back to Rome and thrown into the arena. As in Athens and in Babylon, a slave's real safeguard lay in his market value. But since his value was always diminishing as he grew older, the temptation to abuse him increased with his age. Cato expressly advises shrewd husbandmen to get rid of old oxen and old slaves, and he displays more anxiety regarding the condition of his cattle than of his workmen. As the labourer passed from hand to hand he deteriorated in the process, until the day came when it was useless to offer him for sale in the market, in which, perhaps, he had been already bought and sold a dozen times. Although, as we saw, it has been supposed that the average duration of the life of those whose labour was greatest and treatment worst must have been short, nevertheless many of the robuster

[1] Pignorius, 32. "Tene me ne fugiam et revoca me in foro Traiani in purpuretica ad Pascasium dominum meum" (*Orelli*, 2832).

sort reached middle life and beyond it. During the Empire, for instance, legislation of a more humane kind was passed in favour of slave women who were fifty years old. In any well-conducted farm the labourers who were still vigorous, and therefore valuable, were doubtless treated with at least the care which was bestowed on the oxen. Their allowance of clothing, salt, and oil was sufficient, and we know that they received about four Roman bushels of wheat per month; but it was the poorest wheat. Likewise, Cato advises the farmer to reserve for his slaves only the inferior olives, from which the least oil could be extracted, and even these were to be dealt out with a niggardly hand.[1] When, again, we are told that slaves drank wine, it is well to remember the recipe proposed by Cato. For, according to him, the wine of slaves consisted of a mixture in which vinegar and sea-water formed the largest part.[2] The lodgings of the meaner kind of workmen are described by Columella, who gives a sketch which is probably as true of the slave barracks in the town as in the country. The building was underground, and it was both a workshop and a dormitory. One important feature was that the windows were so high that no hands could reach them (*ne manu contingi possint*). And the overseer is recommended, even by Columella, to pay frequent visits in order to assure himself that the inmates are securely chained.[3] If, as Seneca, Tacitus, and Pliny inform us, Italy owned "legions of slaves" (*mancipiorum legiones*), such private prisons must have been very numerous. That they were always very full is proved by the fact that when once, in the Senate, it was proposed that slaves should be dressed in a particular livery in order to distinguish them from freemen, the proposal

[1] *De Re. Rust.*, 58. [2] Ibid., 104.
[3] "An diligenter vincta (*i.e.* mancipia) sint" (*De Re. Rust.*, viii.).

was rejected on the ground that thereby the servile classes would become aware of their numbers and their strength.

34. The theory of slavery which is announced in Roman law is remarkable for its sincerity. Unlike Aristotle, the Roman jurists made no attempt to invent a casuistry for the justification of the servile system. They frankly admitted that it was founded upon force, that it was "contrary to nature,"[1] and that although according to the "Law of Nations" some men might become slaves, according to the "Law of Nature" "all men are free."[2] The philosophical dilemma in which the Roman lawyers became thus involved does not concern us here, but it marks an important stage in the history of justice. In the interpretation and in the administration of the Law of Rome the position of the slave was at least made so clear that no misunderstanding was possible. According to the Law of Persons, mankind were divided into two great classes, the free and the enslaved,[3] and slaves were either offspring of slaves or they were fallen freemen.[4] As such they were numbered among *res mancipi*. In other words, they were the absolute property of their owners. They were devoid of personality. Hence they received no protection either from the civil law or from the Law of Nations. Their position was such that during many centuries a demand for their protection was held to be as absurd as a demand that a man's furniture should be protected from his violent handling of it. All that distinguished them

[1] "Servitus autem est constitutio juris gentium, qua quis dominio alieno contra naturam subjicitur" (*Inst.*, I. iii. 2).

[2] "Quod attinet ad jus civile, servi pro nullis habentur ; non tamen et jure naturali, quia, quod ad jus naturale attinet, omnes homines æquales sunt" (*Dig.*, L. xvii. 32).

[3] Inst. I. Tit. iii.

[4] "Aut nascuntur aut fiunt" (ibid., I. iii. 4).

from his other possessions was that they were animate and articulate. They were even devoid of a name until their masters chose to give one to them (*servis nullum nomen*). They were incapable of possessing property or of inheriting it. If they received a legacy it fell immediately to the master. No doubt the master frequently allowed the slave to retain the *peculium* or petty fortune which was the result of the slave's own economies in his daily rations. Sometimes, in order to stimulate his activity, even a donation was presented to him, but it was as often withdrawn if there was any sign of slackened energy. In many cases the *peculium* was surrendered as the first instalment of the price of freedom. Even, however, if it reached a considerable sum it never legally belonged to the slave.[1] Supposing a master handed over half his property to his slave, the law still refused to recognise the latter as a proprietor until he became free. And when freedom was granted it was held as precariously as the *peculium*. Nothing indicates more clearly the extraordinary authority which the Roman citizen had arrogated to himself than the fact that he was capable not only of creating another citizen out of the man who had been his slave but of recalling him at will into slavery. If, indeed, the emancipation had taken place before a magistrate and according to strict legal usage, the ex-slave was henceforth a freedman. But the taint of slavery remained till the third generation. The freedman was forbidden to wear the toga or to marry into a patrician family. And in the majority of cases the master reserved rights which bound the slave to a lifetime of service. If he engaged in business it was rather as an agent than as a principal, and if he died the master was the heir of a large part of the property. Liberation, indeed, was often the best

[1] Ihering, ii. 173.

policy for the slave-owner. Thereby he gained a percentage of the profits of the business carried on by a clever slave whose place was easily filled by others of his kind. The freedman was thus subjected to an irksome surveillance by his former lord, to whom he paid a tax for liberty. During the Empire it was specially advantageous for the master to emancipate his slave, because the latter when he became a citizen was allowed a citizen's share in the free distributions of oil and corn, and it need hardly be said that his first duty was to satisfy the claims thereto of his former owner. Both thus became parasites on the State. Men who had spent their lives in the meanest subjection were suddenly elevated to the high rank of Roman citizenship, and constant additions were made to the crowd of idlers who infested the city. In the end the servile system created, indeed, a strange dilemma, because the act of justice which emancipated the slave became really a danger to the State. Slaves had ousted freemen from the industries, the arts, and the liberal professions, and now they elbowed the haughty citizens of Rome. The national unity was destroyed, because a crowd of men belonging to inferior races were made the ignorant heirs of a tradition in which they had no genuine interest. The problem became rapidly so acute that even in the reign of Augustus it was found necessary to make emancipation as difficult as possible, and in the year A.D. 8 there was passed a law which, as we have seen, forbade any citizen to liberate more than a hundred of his slaves. A moral and economic revolution had become necessary before the entire system, with the numerous social evils which it had created, could be swept away. That system had found its greatest support in Roman law; for law remains fixed while opinion changes, or it moves only by slow stages of amelioration. In the age of Constantine it was legal to amputate the

feet of fugitive slaves.[1] A few facts taken at random enable us to see how difficult it must have been for the State to interfere with the private treatment of men who at its own hands received a treatment no less barbarous. If, for instance, a master had been assassinated by a slave, it was legal to condemn to death by crucifixion *all* the slaves who happened to be in the house at the time. Till long after the age of Sulla killing a slave was no murder, and it was not until the time of Antoninus Pius that he who killed his own slave *without cause* was to be judged as if he had killed the slave of another man.[2] The phraseology of the enactment betrays how timidly the work of reform began. For it could not have been difficult for a master to prove that he had had cause for his act. Moreover, during many generations the murderer of a slave was required only to pay to the owner the slave's market price, and it was not until the reign of Claudius that a man who had murdered his own slave was considered to be guilty of murder at all. In Rome, as in Babylon, if a slave were injured an indemnity was paid to the master, and its amount was half the amount payable in the case of injury to a freeman. Again, until the edict of Theodoric there was no punishment for outrage on female slaves unless they were children. There is every reason for supposing that sometimes it was encouraged. And yet, although all kinds of slaves were thus so frequently in danger from the violence of their masters, they were expected to render assistance when those same masters were in danger from the violence of other men, and a refusal was punished by law.

454–526 A.D.

[1] "Si fugitivi servi deprehenduntur ad barbaricum transeuntes, aut pede amputato debilitentur aut metallo dentur aut qualibet alia pœna adficiantur" (Cod., vi. 1, 3).

[2] Inst. I. viii. 2.

35. It is scarcely necessary to add that the slave laboured under complete civil disability. He was incapable of entering into any contract. If it could be proved that he had acted under orders the contract was, indeed, binding upon his master. But the peculiar injustice of the law is seen in the fact that when an unauthorised transaction on the part of the slave had advantageous results the master could claim the profits. On the other hand, if the transaction involved a loss the master could repudiate it. Hence he was able to choose whether in a given instance he should or should not declare that his slave had or had not been acting as his agent. Although the slave was thus capable of rational activities, he was not in the eyes of the law a rational being. His declarations as a witness were of no value unless they had been wrung from him by torture.[1] In Rome, as in Athens, the law courts were the scene of a formidable inquisition. The petitioner and the defendant could demand the slaves of his opponent to be examined by means of torture, the main object of which was to compel the victim to change his declarations.[2] The torture, in fact, was employed by way of cross-examination. In the event of mutilation damages were paid to the owner, and in the case of death not less than double the market value of the slave could be legally demanded. In the reign of Augustus masters were forbidden to emancipate their slaves in order to save them from being tortured as witnesses. Later some modifications were introduced, especially on behalf of women and children, and in a curious phrase "restricted torture" (*tormenta moderata*) is recommended. The names of the instruments which

[1] "Quæstionem intellegere debemus tormenta et corporis dolorem ad eruendam veritatem" (*Dig.*, xlvii. 10, 41).

[2] Mommsen, *Römisches Strafrecht*, 416.

were employed seem, however, to indicate immoderate suffering; for among them were forceps and hooks for tearing the flesh, *fidiculæ* or metal strings for producing ligature, and the rack (*eculeus*) for dislocation.

36. If we now glance at the upper structure of Roman society we shall find that in Rome, as in every other great community of the ancient world, the slaves were the creators of wealth which they did not share. We have seen that there was scarcely an industry or an art in which their activity was unrepresented. And if their labour had been interrupted for a moment the entire organisation of the State would have been thrown into confusion. Slavery, which was described as the great agent of death (*mortis minister*), was likewise the minister of leisure and luxury. The actual solid structure of the city of Rome was its work. For whereas it is probable that the original Palatine city and its walls, and even the later walls and buildings of Servius Tullius, had been partly built by freemen, the walls of Aurelian (A.D. 270–275) and the magnificent palaces, temples, and theatres of imperial Rome were built by slaves. Indeed, the widening circle of the walls of Rome symbolised the wider dominion of a city which, once a hamlet, became at last a State, whose needs required throughout many generations the constant labour of millions of men. The history of Roman architecture forms a part of the history of Roman slavery. If even many of her best architects were slaves,[1] we can imagine the numberless gangs of workmen—the engineers, the quarrymen, the masons, the bricklayers, the plumbers, and the carpenters—who were compelled to serve her. It was during the Empire that buildings were undertaken on such a scale that Rome became one of the new wonders of the world. Even

[1] Marquardt, *Das Privat Leben*, ii. 613.

in later years of the Republic there had been such activity in building that the price of land within the walls had risen enormously, and for the mere site of his Forum Cæsar paid about a million sterling.[1] Each successive emperor, with a few exceptions, attempted to outrival the works of his predecessor, until at last if Nebuchadnezzar had risen from the grave to see Rome he would have found her worthy of his own Babylon. And, indeed, her palaces and her markets became so full of the stuffs of the East, and her whole social scheme became so Oriental, that Nebuchadnezzar would have felt himself at home. For although Rome employed Greek architects, and plundered the temples of Greece, and aped Greek manners, she never understood Greek art or took any delight in it. Nero dreamed of making her a second Babylon, and wished to call her Neropolis. Her own artistic instincts were almost barbaric, and she chose Oriental in preference to Hellenic decoration. Her colossal public buildings recalled the great structures of Babylon, and involved the same amount of servile labour. Utility, not superficial beauty, was the fundamental principle at least of the architecture of her amphitheatres. The Circus Maximus accommodated 285,000 spectators, and the Colosseum not less than 87,000. In her vast public warehouses she was able to store millions of bushels of grain. As the city grew greater the size and the splendour of the national buildings were increased. The Forum of Augustus, with its inner façades of dazzling white marble, was doubtless a noble structure, but the Forum of Trajan was conceived on a grander scale. In order merely to prepare its site, the ridge of tufa rock which connected the Capitol and the Quirinal was removed by the labour of thousands of slaves. There is some controversy re-

[1] Suet., *Cæs.*, 26.

garding the original height of that ridge, but whether or not it had reached the height of the column of Trajan, which commemorated the work, the labour involved in its reduction must have been enormous if, as some writers have calculated, more than 20,000,000 cubic feet of earth had been removed. The labour, however, which went to create a building like Trajan's Forum was not confined to Italy. Some of the marble columns which flanked the great square had been quarried by slaves in Egypt, Greece, and the Greek islands, and had been transported by slaves in ships which slaves had expressly built for the purpose. The buildings surrounding the Forum, such as the Basilica and the two libraries, were roofed with gilt bronze, and the cost of every detail of this and of every other elaborate design of Roman architecture was only the inferior food of the workmen.[1] Ancient writers frankly admit that all such great buildings were paid for by the spoils of conquest (*de manubiis*), but the living spoils in the shape of prisoners were the chief agents in their erection.

37. Augustus set up in the heart of the city a golden milestone (*milliarium aureum*), or rather a Terminus pillar, which was the meeting-point of all the great Roman roads. Every one of those roads, which connected the metropolis with the west, middle, and east of Europe, was made and kept in repair by chained gangs of road-makers and road-menders, who, since they were employed in the *opus publicum*, or public works, were branded with the seal of the State. On the main highways there were slave couriers who, under the supervision of postmasters (*junctores jumentarii*), carried the royal mail to different parts of the Empire, and brought back the news from the provinces. Some of the roads were built on a solid

[1] Middleton, ii. 318.

basis of tufa blocks, and were provided with milestones which recorded the distance from the city's gates. Such, for instance, was the Via Appia, which joined Rome and Capua, and was ultimately extended to Brindisi and the sea. That was the quickest mail route to the East, and at the coast ships lay ready to sail for Egypt and the ports of Asia, Asia Minor, and Greece. All the great caravan routes which had once found their terminus at Babylon and at Nineveh thus found their new terminus at Rome. One of those startling facts which prove the courage and energy of ancient traders is that over the long roads, which had once seen the caravans moving slowly towards Babylon, new teams brought regular supplies of silk from China and muslin from India for the markets of Rome. Likewise, a new generation of sailors on the Persian Gulf and the Euphrates, up the Red Sea and along the old coasts of Tyre and Sidon, were carrying freights for a new generation of rulers, who had transferred the seat of the world's government from the East to the West. From the end of the Republic till the end of the Empire Rome was the new world market and the centre of finance. Her trade was carried on in three continents, and reached from India to Britain. Horace records with astonishment the fact that three and four times within a single year Roman merchants set sail for the Atlantic.[1] They brought back tin and other commodities from Britain. The dogs of Scotland, for instance, were highly prized at Rome, and every country was made to deliver up its special products. Although the Africa which Rome knew was only a strip, and although Africa's best protection for that gold which still excites modern finance was the wide open gate of her desert, still, the rumour of African gold had reached

[1] "Dis carus (mercator) ipsis, quippe ter et quater
Anno revisens æquor Atlanticum Impune"—(*Odes*, i. 31).

Rome, and gold-dust was sold to her goldsmiths.[1] Although, too, the negro race appear to have escaped the Roman slave-hunters to await those of Christian Europe, yet Rome had inherited the slaves of Carthage, and they were now at work for her in the marble quarries of Numidia and the mines of Spain. Even in the days of the Republic some 40,000 men were kept chained in the Spanish silver mines. But the Empire was the heir of all those lands which the Republic conquered, and their potential wealth became the Imperial Treasury. In the triumphant processions of Roman generals captives from all the world's great nations were paraded before the citizens, and the day came when a Roman poet could, without exaggeration, ask a Roman emperor if there was any people so remote or so barbarous as not to have a representative at Rome.[2] She became the patron of all arts and industries, and was to Europe what Babylon had once been to Asia. Let us not forget, however, that it was the obscure labour of thousands of nameless unpaid mechanics which made her great and gay for the zenith.

38. Centuries had passed since the rude Roman forefathers had attempted to drain the marsh-lands of the Tiber, and now an army of slaves were kept at work on the great hydraulic system which controlled the water supply of Rome. The fourteen aqueducts which provided daily a volume of more than 50,000,000 cubic feet of water, and kept numerous fountains playing in the pleasure-grounds of the city, were built by servile labour. A special aqueduct fifty miles long brought water to the artificial waterfalls of Nero's palace on the

[1] Duruy, p. 89.

[2] "Quæ tam seposita est, quæ gens tam barbara, Cæsar,
Ex qua spectator non sit in urbe tua?"
—MARTIAL, *De Spect.*, iii.

Palatine, and his sea-baths were connected with the Mediterranean, which was distant sixteen miles. Slaves were excluded, except as attendants, from the great imperial public baths which slaves had built. A special aqueduct fed the baths of Caracalla, which, although not the largest, were yet able to accommodate about 1600 bathers, and were most sumptuously fitted. Sixty-four cisterns, each of which was 50 feet long, 28 feet wide, and 30 feet high,[1] formed the reservoir, and by an elaborate system of heating and of plumber's work the water could be made tepid, warm, or hot according as the bather desired. The floors of the great rooms and halls were of porphyry and marble, and the bronze roofs were supported by pillars of granite and alabaster. The *tepidarium*, or warm room, and the *sudarium*, or sweating-room, for luxurious bathers would have astonished those old republican senators who used to carry on the affairs of the State in a senate-house in which, even during the coldest Roman winter, no fire was ever kindled. They would have been still more surprised to see the fashionable men of the new Rome going through an elaborate toilet in those baths, where they were served by a host of slaves—washmen, anointers, shampooers, hairdressers, and manicurists—who had become the indispensable ministers of elegance. When we remember that the baths of Diocletian, built on an even greater scale than those of Nero or of Caracalla, could receive at one time as many as 3200 bathers, we shall be able to guess how much had been done for the comfort of Roman citizens. For the baths were more than baths. Within their immense enclosures were to be found restaurants, gymnasia, lounges, reading-rooms, elaborate gardens, and promenades. Crowds of slaves, from stoker to *masseur*, formed the permanent service staff. That service was

[1] Middleton, ii. 171.

so perfect, and the entire organisation was so up-to-date, that it is no wonder if the citizens waited impatiently for the sounding of the great bell (*æs thermarum*) which announced the opening of the doors.

39. It has been calculated that the imperial city contained about twenty-five and a half acres of open spaces,[1] which included the great Forums and some of the finest arches, statues, and temples. Her inhabitants probably numbered about 2,000,000, but the vast majority were slaves, for whom such pleasure-grounds were never constructed. Excluded except as public or private servants from the baths, the gardens and the theatres, they were also excluded from the great colonnades which occupied three miles of the Campus Martius, and provided shelter in the heat. The pavements of the porticoes were of porphyry and jasper, and the capitals of the two thousand marble columns were of gilt brass. Greek chisels had adorned these and other great buildings dedicated to the gods of the State. On the Palatine there was a Temple of Apollo, built of Carrara marble, and the god's chariot of bronze on the top of the pediment might be seen gleaming in the sunshine. But neither in that temple nor in the Temple of Capitoline Jupiter, nor at the shrines dedicated to Roma Æterna and Venus Felix, could the fugitive slave find any asylum, even although slaves had built every one of them. There was a Temple of Concord, which must likewise have been their handiwork, and it is described as a marble masterpiece. But it seemed strangely out of place in a community in which the social discord had been steadily increasing for generations. Slaves had prayed in vain to ineffectual gods whose statues they had helped to set up. Half of the gods of the world, indeed, had found a new residence in Rome. But just as the churches of

[1] Lanciani, "Ancient Rome," p. 89.

London are losing touch with the life and thoughts of her vast populace, so the worship of many old Roman gods was treated with indifference. There had arisen new problems which the old faith could not solve, and there was no longer any genuine relation between the national religion and the nation's life. Rome, indeed, had become so full of statues and busts that, in the pleasing exaggeration of an ancient writer, they were as numerous as the inhabitants. But the ruling class had become as impassive to human suffering as these effigies of gods and statesmen. In her attempt to allow nothing to escape her, Rome had even brought from Zion the golden vessels and the seven-branched candlestick which had once done service for Jehovah, and had placed them in the Temple of Peace in the Forum of Peace. In a kind of magnificent tolerance, which, however, was only weakness, she welcomed the gods of Africa and of Asia and their devotees, and even astrologers calling themselves of Babylon were summoned to the council of her emperors.[1] But this search for new emotions, and this vast spiritual confusion which the Christian religion helped to deepen, were only signs of the social chaos which was accumulating. Perhaps in no city, not even in Babylon or in London, has the contrast between human wealth and pride and human sorrow been so violent. In her financial might, and as the seat of speculators, a great writer has compared her to London, but in her usury she dealt not merely in money but in men. There can be no doubt that her progress as a rakish and spendthrift city was accelerated by her contact with the East. The education of her children was, at least till the creation of public schools under the Empire,[2] chiefly conducted by slaves from

[1] Juvenal, x. 94 ; vi. 553.
[2] Boissier, *La Fin du Paganisme*, i. 175 *sqq*.

Greece, Asia Minor, and Asia, and a strange and dangerous blending of temperaments was the result. Her trade, too, was an import trade, and it consisted chiefly of objects of Oriental luxury, with which the children of the wealthiest citizens became familiar while still in the arms of their nurses. In a passage of quaint beauty the elder Pliny likens the Tiber to a contented merchant (*mercator placidissimus*) who receives the goods of the entire world. It is often said that Roman commerce was only passive, and the saying is true in the sense that Rome exported nothing. But Italian industries were very ancient, and although the free industrial classes were, at least during a long period, almost wholly displaced by slaves, many native factories were kept busy during the Empire. Some of the old guilds, such as the shoemakers, boasted that they had received their charter from Numa, and it is interesting to note that even during the Empire the shoemakers and other workers in leather were freemen. Italy cannot have been wholly unproductive as long as agricultural implements, military boots, weapons, harness, lamps, and pottery were manufactured, and carpenters, bricklayers, cutlers, goldsmiths, weavers, and dyers remained busy. In Rome itself there was a street called the "Street of the Glassmakers" (*vicus vitrarius*). But she consumed all that she created. Moreover, her artisans were chiefly foreign slaves, who thus profited by a technical education which was lost to the Romans. In the great region of industry Rome was represented by proxy, and as she grew richer by the plunder of other States, the tendency was to encourage those industries which produced articles of luxury. For instance, only the coarsest kinds of linen stuffs were manufactured in Italy, and all the finest webs came from Syria. Silk materials were likewise imported in enormous quantities, and when, as late as the sixth century A.D.,

the Emperor Justinian encouraged silk-weaving, the industry was set up not in Rome, which had already fallen, but in Byzantium. Although it seems that Oriental fabrics were sometimes subjected to new industrial processes in Italy, Rome was generally content to receive ready-made goods. In the Portico of the Septa were to be found the rich dealers who sold special products of the East—fabrics and furniture of all kinds, handsome slaves, Greek busts, Phœnician purple, ivory, crystal, porcelain, and perfume. Since at great Roman banquets perfume was sprinkled on the guests, the finest and most rare scents of the East and myrrh and cinnabar were in great demand. Incense came from Arabia, and from Cyrene attar of roses. In the two hundred and ninety public warehouses luxuries and necessities lay stored. Domitian even built a storehouse for Eastern spices, and in the national granaries millions of bushels of foreign wheat were kept ready for distribution. Owing to the great concentration of landed property the land had ceased to be productive, and there was practically no Italian harvest. In the reign of Augustus 48,115,000 bushels of grain were imported from Egypt, and sufficed only for four months. The wine, wool, oil, pottery, honey, and sulphur of Italy were certainly incapable of balancing the vast importation of all those commodities which Rome required. Her payments were made in gold. The vineyards of the Mediterranean, of Syria, and of Greece gave her wine; Sicily gave wheat in vast quantities, beef, oil, and wool; cheese, honey, and wine came from Switzerland; and from Spain, gold and silver, copper and iron, wool, horses, and wheat. Even the shores of the Dead Sea were made to contribute asphalt for embalming, and the quarries of Greece, which Phidias had inspected, yielded new blocks of marble. The pearls and jewels which the goldsmiths offered in the Via Sacra came

from the Orient. Rome, in herself inartistic, enslaved art and artists for her own purpose. Her barbaric delight in vivid colouring, which, for instance, was exhibited in the gold and scarlet decoration on the great column of Trajan, was stimulated by this Eastern commerce. Although Babylon and Nineveh were long gone, their name and trade-mark were still given to goods which brought great prices in the Roman market. Even in the age of Lucretius vast sums were spent on "Babylonian coverlets,"[1] and in the age of Juvenal luxurious Romans bought "down of Sardanapalus."[2] By her commerce, as by her policy, Rome brought the East and the West into the closest contact which they had known.

40. The effect of the hurried influx of so many luxuries has been the theme of many moralists, and we shall not dwell upon it. We are more interested in the fact that that luxury was mainly if not altogether the product of unpaid labour. It is, however, right to notice all the forces which gradually denationalise a nation, and to ask why Rome ceased to be Rome. Recently attempts have been made to darken the lights on the picture of her luxury, and we have been warned that Juvenal is a misleading guide.[3] A distinguished scholar maintains that Juvenal "treated abnormal specimens as types," and that therefore he does not deserve "implicit trust."[4] We prefer to believe with Gibbon that Juvenal is trustworthy, and that he "painted from the life."[5] The truth probably is that Juvenal deserves as much confidence as Régnier or Laclos. Juvenal was too great an artist not to know that in art the abnormal should

[1] IV. 1122. [2] "Pluma Sardanapali" (Sat. x. 362).
[3] Boissier, *L'Opposition sous les Césars*, pp. 317 *sqq*.
[4] Dill, "Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius," p. 65.
[5] Ch. xxxi. p. 284.

never occupy the place of the normal, and that satire fails in proportion as it becomes caricature. It is true that the Empire was, or appeared to be, "erect ten generations after Juvenal and the objects of his loathing were in their graves."[1] But ten generations in the lifetime of a State are only as ten years in the lifetime of an individual, and the good physician is he who detects the sleeping germs of the disease. It required a long succession of moral maladies to shake the frame of so powerful a people. The symptoms which Juvenal diagnosed were visible long before the Republic fell, and yet the Republic fell only to rise again in a new form by the help of the genius of a single man. The latent weaknesses of the structure, however, had not been provided for in the new lease of life, and the lease had scarcely been renewed when they began to make themselves felt. Juvenal is by no means isolated in his view of Roman society. He belonged to a small group of deeper thinkers who, although separated by time, were united in spirit. From Cato to Ammianus Marcellinus, those men, among whom Lucilius, Horace, Seneca, and Tacitus are numbered, felt the pressure of some of the problems of ancient life and of Rome, and were profoundly conscious of the tragedy which lay hidden in the heart of the State. We prefer to trust men who had the scene under their eyes. If, for instance, we trust Juvenal (and if we have imagination we are bound to trust him) when he portrays to the life an upstart waving a hand in the air on the pretence of cooling it, but in reality for the sole purpose of displaying the ring on one of his fingers,[2] or if we trust Juvenal when he points at a glutton staggering with an

[1] Dill, "Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire," p. 99.

[2] "Ventilat æstivum digitis sudantibus aurum" (i. 28).

undigested peacock to the bath,[1] why should we distrust him when he tells us that every vice had reached its climax in Rome?[2] He says that in the age of Domitian money was the measure of all things, and that every man had his price.[3] But that was no less true of the last days of the Republic when Cæsar was steadily buying the road to power, and buying it, too, with other people's money and with the plunder of Gaul. When, again, Juvenal asks what chance he can have at Rome since he does not know how to lie,[4] he is using almost the same language as Martial, who warns "a good poor man" never to set foot in a city[5] which was alive only as corruption is alive. Juvenal and Martial were doubtless poets with chagrins, and they lived with strange boon companions; but at least Juvenal supplies precisely that element of indignation which the age needed, and he is in the company of Seneca and of Tacitus. From another quarter he receives corroboration in Petronius. When Juvenal illuminates for us passionate Roman nights, he is busy with types which were not only not abnormal, but had been inherited from an earlier and were about to be bequeathed to a later generation. The fiery lines which paint the period of Tiberius, Nero, and Domitian would not, after all, have been out of place in the age of Cæsar, and they would have depicted even in detail the age of Honorius. On the one side the satirist belongs to the school of Cato, and on the other to the school of Ammianus Marcellinus and, we may even add, of Salvianus. During the six hundred and sixty years which separated the

[1] Juvenal, i. 143.
[2] "Omne in præcipiti vitium stetit" (ibid., 149).
[3] "Omnia Romæ cum pretio" (iii. 183).
[4] "Quid Romæ faciam? Mentiri nescio" (iii. 41).
[5] "Unde miser vives? homo fidus, certus amicus.
Hic nihil est" (*Epigrammata*, iv. 5).

censorship of Cato (184 B.C.) from the fall of the Western Empire (A.D. 476) the gap between Roman wealth and Roman poverty had become immense, and on both sides of the gap numerous social evils had accumulated. Like a fiery cross the spirit of Juvenal appears throughout the entire period, and in a certain form it reappears even in the writings of the early Church. The continuity of the satire indicates the reality and the continuity of the things satirised.

41. Ammianus Marcellinus, who was writing almost within sight of the catastrophe, expresses for us in a few sentences all that had happened to the State since the day when old Cato wished to pave the Forum with sharp-pointed stones in order to drive away the saunterers. After a stern education on Italian soil, the Republic, still rejoicing in its youth,[1] had fought its way through the world, and had brought back trophies from every field. But war brought wealth, and wealth brought ease, and the State began to exploit its own prestige and was tempted to live on its reputation.[2] At last, according to Ammianus, the great Romans, ruined by success and a long peace, were content to measure the height of their greatness by the height of their carriages.[3] But it is too often forgotten that this luxury and idleness of the ruling class dated from the Republic. Macrobius, who was probably a contemporary of Ammianus, actually tries to prove that the manners of his own age were less ostentatious than the manners of the age of Cæsar. He mentions that wealthy republicans slept on ivory beds, that they indulged in elaborate pleasures of the table, and that even grave persons had caught the con-

[1] "Populus in juvenem erectus" (xiv. 6).
[2] "Nomine solo aliquoties vincens" (ibid., xiv. 6).
[3] "Alii summum decus in carruchis solito altioribus . . . ponentes" (xiv. 6, 9).

tagion of the extravagance which the new commerce fostered.[1] At a celebrated official banquet at which Cæsar was a guest the *hors d'œuvres* alone might have fed a multitude. The tastes of the gay world of that age have even been described as gross. It was a world which hoped to pay its debts by the plunder of the provinces. Commerce was despised,[2] and landowning, rhetoric, and politics were considered the only proper occupations of a gentleman. But the land had gradually been acquired by a small powerful group of capitalists, and scarcely two thousand citizens had a fixed income.[3] The Republic has been described as having been made up, at its close, of a few millionaires and a mass of beggars. Agriculture was dying and free industry was dead. The finances were in confusion, and most of the statesmen of the day were in debt. Senators, debarred from trade, carried on usury in secret. The administration of justice was under suspicion. A few capitalists farmed their immense domains by slave labour, converted agricultural holdings into pleasure-grounds, or gratified a ridiculous taste by the construction of vast and useless fish-ponds.[4] Freemen were being driven out of the country, and their places were taken by thousands of slaves. The birth-rate among the citizens was falling. In short, all the causes which helped to weaken the Athenian Republic, and would break up the Roman Empire, were in operation in Cæsar's Rome, and yet the State staggered back to its equilibrium.

42. But in the new order of things the old disorder lay latent, because the Roman Empire was a reconstruction without a regeneration. Tacitus looked into its

[1] "Accipite, et inter gravissimas personas non defuisse luxuriam" (*Saturnalia*, ii. 9).

[2] "Opificesque omnes in sordida arte versantur" (*De Officiis*, i. 42).

[3] Ibid., ii. 21.

[4] Varro, *De Re. Rust.*, iii. 17, 6.

foundations and declared them to be unsound.[1] He points out that even in the reign of Tiberius the army had lost its ardour, although he skilfully puts this criticism into the mouth of a foreigner.[2] Italy was unproductive and poverty-stricken (*inops*), and the citizens had become unwarlike (*imbelles*). It was in such circumstances that Roman society offered material for the satire of Juvenal, Seneca, and Petronius. The first two fixed upon the vices of the upper classes, while the last made a special study of a new, dangerous type, the freedman, who had gained his freedom by having outwitted his master.[3] Petronius, like Juvenal, paints from the life, and his Trimalchio is the vivid impersonation of a class whose existence had become inevitable in Rome. It is probable that the advent of the freedmen helped to stimulate Roman commerce and to postpone its decay, but these men were really a new social peril. They imitated, or rather they outrivalled, the extravagance of their former masters. After a sumptuous bath, Trimalchio, the ex-slave, is rubbed down with the finest wool by his own slaves. To indicate the high position which he has now reached, he wipes his hands on a slave's head, is carried in a litter by his own *lecticarii*, and has slaves as runners, and slaves are yoked to his chariot. He possesses torturers, upon whose science he depends for the proper administration of domestic punishment. His wits have enabled him to accumulate an immense property, and in one of his domains as many as thirty male and forty female slaves are born to him in a single day. His threshing-floors are busy, and he can load his ships with all kinds of freights, including slaves. But Trimalchio is at least

[1] *Annales*, i. 4.
[2] "Nihil validum in exercitibus nisi quod externum" (ibid., iii. 40).
[3] "Dominus in domo factus sum" (*Cena Trimalchionis*, 76).

frank. He, a *nouveau riche*, reproduces every detail of the scheme with which he was so familiar when he was a drudge in a great Roman house. And in six words he gives us the new ethical principle which the entire system had introduced into Rome. "Nothing is wrong," says Trimalchio, "if it is a master's order."[1] That was the principle which had so long defied Roman law, and it contained half the secret of Roman ruin. In spite of hostile legislation, it was still active when the Empire was nearing its end. And here we come back to Ammianus, who depicts the same society which drew the arrows of Petronius and Juvenal. The only difference is that that society is now beyond redemption. Neither has Christianity nor have its own gods saved it. Its *convivia longa*, its gangs of slaves, of whom at least fifty accompany every grandee to the baths;[2] its starved mob, sniffing from afar the dinners of the rich,[3] or spending the night in the taverns, or under wretched tents, or in the streets; the friendships which are only the friendships of the gaming-table;[4] the immense, weary parade of dead conventions, at last indicate a Rome ready for the invader. But the old soldier adds a piquant touch of his own. He tells us that the Romans had not only ceased to be soldiers but had become sham sportsmen. They now hunt by proxy, and when sport is dangerous their slaves take the risks.[5]

43. But slaves and the prisoners of war were compelled to face in the amphitheatre even greater and more fatal risks for the public amusement of the Romans. And here again we find that the Republic had forestalled the tastes of the Empire. Public games which

[1] "Nec turpe est quod dominus iubet" (*Cena Trimalchionis*, 75).
[2] Ammianus, xxviii. 4, 9.
[3] Ibid., xxviii. 4, 34.
[4] "Amicitiæ aleariæ solæ sociales sunt" (ibid., xxviii. 4, 21).
[5] "Alienis laboribus venaturi" (ibid., xxviii. 4, 18).

involved the slaughter of animals and of men had long been provided by a succession of political adventurers, who were determined to win the goodwill of the mob. Gladiatorial combats appear to have had a Lydian or Etruscan origin,[1] but they were introduced into Rome as early as 264 B.C. During the second last century of the Republic a single gladiatorial show cost as much as £7000. In 65 B.C. Cæsar exhibited three hundred and twenty pairs of gladiators. In 44 B.C. he built a great amphitheatre, and displayed before the admiring multitude wild beasts in silver cages. At a single spectacle three hundred lions perished. Whereas the Greeks, even when under Roman influence, refused to countenance gladiatorial shows, the Roman taste in such matters grew wilder. In the wooden theatre erected by Scaurus crocodiles and hippopotami were made to fight before thousands of spectators. The taste had become so thoroughly national that in the epitaphs of statesmen it was mentioned to their honour that they had provided at their own expense fireworks and bloody games.[2] For instance, in the great epitaph which Augustus prepared for himself he reminds posterity that he had given the people exhibitions in which almost three thousand five hundred beasts had been slaughtered.[3] The Romans found the mere drama tame, and even held it in contempt. One of their dramatists complained that he could not compete against rope-dancers. And he stated that the failure of one of his plays was explained by the fact that during its progress a rumour reached the theatre that a gladiatorial show was about to take place. The theatre was immediately

[1] Tertullian, *De Spect.*, 5.

[2] "Populo . . . gladiatores dedit, lumina ludos . . . solus fecit" (*Orelli*, 3324 ; *cf.* 134, and 3858).

[3] "Quibus (venationibus) confecta sunt bestiarum circiter trium milium et quingenta" (Lipsius, *De Amphitheatro*, i. 5).

emptied. The craze for this wilder and more sensational theatrical bill increased rapidly, and even the Christian emperors were compelled to gratify it. They assured the people that the public pleasure in such sports was dear to the imperial heart.[1] One of the reasons given for the preservation of pagan temples in Christian Rome was that originally they were centres of the games of the circus and the combats of the arena.[2] The effect of these and similar exhibitions on the minds of the people had, however, already been foreseen by some of the wiser statesmen of the Republic. One of those apparently trivial facts which help to illuminate national character is that at first all Roman theatres were considered to be only temporary structures and were built of wood. In 154 B.C. the Senate voted that a stone theatre which was in course of erection should be pulled down. It was not until 55 B.C. that the first stone theatre was built, and it was the gift of Pompey. The change in the spirit of the people is, therefore, well indicated by such vast constructions as the Colosseum, whose immense blocks, still standing, were hewn and placed in their present position by great gangs of slaves. The State had now become the purveyor of public amusement, and the Roman people were now content to live upon the largesses of their rulers. A few facts taken at random reveal a kind of public madness. The jungles of Asia and of Africa were ransacked, and slaves hunted and captured wild beasts, of which slaves would be the victims in the arena at Rome. The Nile gave up its monsters, and an ever-changing menagerie was presented on the stage. The most diabolical ingenuity was displayed in devising new

[1] Theodosian Code, xv. 7, 3.

[2] "Nam ex nonnullis (templis) vel ludorum vel circensium vel agonum origo fuerit, non convenit ea convelli, ex quibus populo Romano præbeatur priscarum solemnitas voluptatem" (ibid., xvi. 10, 3).

kinds of combat—an elephant against a rhinoceros, a bear against a buffalo, a panther against a tiger, and a lion against a man. Sometimes the animals were tied together, and in that entanglement both perished. It seemed as if the Romans desired to have under their own eyes a reduced, but realistic picture of that war of species of which nature is always full. Martial is certainly not guilty of exaggeration when he tells us that the wild beasts became wilder after they had arrived at Rome.[1] It is difficult to know whether these duels or the duels between human beings gave greater satisfaction to the public. At any rate, the Romans were not satisfied until they had seen human blood on the scented arena.[2] It was the blood of prisoners of war and of slaves. For while it is true that, at least during the Empire, the names of freemen occur in the lists of gladiators,[3] the vast majority of the men condemned to these ordeals were hired out for the purpose by their owners. In the ruins of Pompeii, a town which owned a great gladiatorial school, there were discovered the charred skeletons of gladiators with the chains still upon them. Sometimes as many as four or five thousand of these men perished in a year. An enormous increase in the number of the spectacles had taken place during the Empire. Whereas in the time of the Republic there were sixty-six fête-days, in the reign of Marcus Aurelius the number was one hundred and thirty-five, and in the fourth century it was one hundred and seventy-five. Sometimes the spectacles lasted for a hundred days, so that the entire year was consumed. And it was not until A.D. 404—that is to say,

[1] "Postquam inter nos est plus feritatis habet." He is here speaking of a tiger (*Epigrammata*, vi. 20).

[2] The sand of the amphitheatre was sprinkled with perfume (Petronius, 34).

[3] Ritschl, p. 13.

within six years of the sack of Rome—that the gladiatorial combats were abolished. In the words of Martial, the gladiator was the "darling of the age."[1] Each of those muscular giants who, armed with lasso and dagger, had destroyed all his opponents was received with acclamation, and his freedom was often demanded by the people. The audience tolerated no cowardice. If any of the victims advanced timidly, either towards the wild beasts or towards the human competitor prepared for him, he was urged on by blows from red-hot iron rods,[2] while the spectators shouted, "Adhibete! adhibete!" which we may translate, "Give it him! give it him!" The men who were compelled to provide this frightful amusement for the Roman people were drawn from every country in which Roman arms had won victory. During the Republic stubborn Samnites, Gauls, Thracians, and Carthaginians had appeared in the arena. But under the Empire every new batch of prisoners of war furnished new gladiators, and all nationalities had representatives in the amphitheatrical duels. The throne identified itself with the taste of the multitude, and Commodus took apartments in the School of the Gladiators. Perhaps, however, it was later that the public fury reached its real climax. Even gladiatorial shows must have appeared tame compared with the public vengeance which, in the reign of Nero, was wreaked upon Christians falsely accused of the burning of Rome. Hundreds of them were sent into the arena to be crucified, and then to be torn piecemeal from their crosses by the teeth of wild beasts; or they were dressed in inflammable clothes which suddenly exploded; or made to play parts in scenes of extraordinary debauch, borrowed from the mythologies; or they were tossed

[1] "Sæculi voluptas" (*Epigrammata,* v. 24).
[2] Friedländer, vi. 134.

naked on the horns of bulls, while the Emperor looked on through his emerald eyeglass; or, finally, if reserved for the evening's entertainment, they were covered with pitch and fixed to poles and then set on fire, in order that they might thus illuminate the chariot races.

44. If we now ask which form of this fearful abuse of power was mainly responsible for the decay of the Roman State we are presented with a problem which, at this time of day, is almost too complex for solution. Any attempt to answer that question by means of a single generalisation may be dismissed as unworthy of so vast a subject. We shall at least find no help in the shallow sophistry that it was the Christian religion which, when it became the religion of the emperors, caused the fall of Rome. If, indeed, that could be proved, let us say boldly that in spite of Rome's greatness the world's debt to Christianity would be thereby increased. For it is impossible to admit that a State whose existence depended on such a vast and insolent usufruct of human lives should have continued to exist. Not even Christianity, however, was able to arrest an inevitable process, and Rome was moribund long before the Edict of Milan. The Church believed that miracles had accompanied the first apparition of the Christian religion, and that they continued to attest the power of the saints. But the real miracle, which never happened, would have been the deliverance of Rome from the effects of causes which had already destroyed all other States. The truth is not that Christianity, with its new doctrine of passivity, ruined Rome, but that Rome ruined Christianity. In the annals of courage there is probably nothing more wonderful than the fact that the Church, although weak and helpless, had come westwards to face the fearful panoply of Roman might. And it will always remain one of the most impressive things in human history that it is in the confusion

and the roar of Rome that we seem to hear the first faint sound of the bells of Christ. But the truth is not that the Church absorbed the State, but that the State absorbed the Church. When the new religion was caught in the vortex of the world's politics the divine mission of Jesus, like the mission of Buddha, became gradually entangled with alien schemes. The angry hostility of the writer of the Book of Revelation against Rome was changed into the acquiescence of a man like St. Jerome, who deplored her fall. It is no doubt startling that whereas Constantine, when he made a State entry, used to be preceded by a procession of the old pagan gods, the day came when the cross was carried before him. It is even more startling to know that once when certain Christian sects implored his mediation, he who had been a pagan replied that they should not expect judgment from a man who was himself to be judged by Christ. But although the cross became the monogram of the Empire, and was engraved on the shields of Roman soldiers, there was little fundamental change in the political and social system of the State. The amphitheatrical combats were continued even although the Theodosian Code admitted their cruelty.[1] The law of the Christian Emperor Constantine which permitted a master to amputate the feet of a fugitive slave was incorporated more than two hundred years later in the code of the Christian Emperor Justinian. In spite of some ameliorations in the servile condition, it was impossible for Christianity to shake the accumulated authority of centuries of privilege. Nay, Christians themselves owned slaves, and St. Chrysostom denounced Christian ladies for cruelty. On the authority of writers like Salvianus and Jerome, Christian society reproduced even in detail that mode of life which the first generation

[1] "Cruenta spectacula in otio civili et domestica quiete non placent" (xv. 12, 1).

of Christians had condemned. To suppose that because Christianity became the official religion of Rome any deep or immediate change occurred in the national life, is to suppose that because Christianity is likewise the official religion of modern European States no modern war is possible, and that within every State all men are brothers. We find, on the contrary, that the "Prince of this World," as Christ called him, was early busy among the successors of the fishermen of Galilee, and that his victories were easy. Whereas the Christians of the first century had refused to enter the amphitheatre, those of the second displayed such a passion for it that Tertullian wrote a pamphlet to warn them of their guilt.[1] In the fifth century Salvianus admitted that when a fête of the Church clashed with a show at the circus the Christians would be found in the circus. And he asks them to say honestly whether they are not conscious of a desire to hear the words of the actor rather than the words of Christ.[2] This absorption of the new Christian spirit in the older spirit of Roman custom and tradition was already naïvely foreshadowed by Tertullian. For in reply to the charge that the Christians were a barren and unprofitable sect he pointed out that, on the contrary, they engaged in business like ordinary citizens and were to be found wherever Romans were to be found—in the market-place, in the Forum, in the taverns, and at the baths.[3] Now, this contact between the Church and the world had already borne its fruit before the age of Jerome. If he and Salvianus are suspected of exaggeration when they depict the pagan manners of the times,

[1] "Animadverte, Christiane, quot numina immunda possederint circum. Aliena est tibi religio quam tot diaboli spiritus occupaverunt" (*De Spect.*, 8).

[2] "Verba vitæ an verba mortis, verba Christi an verba mimi" (*De Gubernatione Dei*, vii. 7, 37; *cf.* vi. 4, 20).

[3] *Apol.*, vi. 42.

they at least deserve trust when they are painting the manners of the Christians, since in this case they must have been tempted rather to conceal the truth. Both, however, write in a style which proves that the Gospel had failed to subdue the spirit of the age. The contagion had reached even the leaders of the Church, who, if they endured long fasts, enjoyed also long banquets.[1] Jerome confesses that he is ashamed to admit how many of the Church's children the world had already stolen.[2] In an epigram[3] which appears to have been a parody of a passage of St. Paul the Christians excused their worst lapses, and frequently diverted attention from their adventures by sallies of blasphemous wit. The luxury of the women, their elaborate toilets, their mantles of the colour of hyacinth,[4] and their troops of lovers made it difficult to distinguish them from the pagan society in which they moved. The spirit of nonconformity thus appears to have lost its vigour very early. There is a passage in the Theodosian Code which indicates in even a more striking way this fusion between modes of life and thought which had been at first in violent antagonism, for it appears that Christians had actually been appointed as custodians of the pagan temples.[5] These and many similar facts, therefore, would be sufficient to prove that if the Christian religion contributed to the fall of Rome, the reason cannot have been that its later spirit was incapable of combining with the spirit of the old civilisation which it encountered. And the other charge, that the loss of national energy was due precisely to this

[1] Jerome, Ep. xxii. 13.

[2] "Pudet dicere quot quotidie Virgines ruant, quantas de suo gremio mater perdat Ecclesia" (ibid., xxii. 13).

[3] "Omnia munda mundis."

[4] "Hyacinthina læna."

[5] "Quisquis seu iudex seu apparitor ad custodiam templorum homines Christianæ religionis adposuerit sciat non saluti suæ non fortunis esse parcendum" (Theod. Code, xvi. 1, 1).

combination of Christianity and the State and to the destruction of faith in the old national gods, finds its refutation in Tertullian, who points out that the faith in the national gods was already thoroughly decayed.[1]

45. But the new religion as represented by its *greatest* men, such as Tertullian or Jerome, was undoubtedly a regenerating influence in the State. It must have been a perception of the social sterility and stagnation of the Roman system which caused Tertullian, who was a brilliant jurist, to abandon a lucrative practice at the Bar for the study and practice of the Gospel. He was familiar with the entire organisation of Roman law, and knew that its crushing weight was felt most severely in the lowest social strata. It must have been a conviction of the failure of Roman civilisation which compelled him to accept the new revolution expressed in the new religion. It is true that Christians kept slaves, and that Christian writers sometimes spoke with the old contempt for the entire servile class.[2] But they were aware that the slaves only imitated their masters.[3] Indeed, it is among the Christian writers that we discover the only genuine perception of the social problems of the day. Their earnestness is in the strongest contrast with the lethargy of the leaders of Roman society. If, for instance, we compare Jerome with Symmachus we shall find that the kind of energy which might have saved the State belongs not to the pagan but to the Christian. Symmachus, although he was a senator and had been prætor, quæstor, proconsul, and consul, is blind to the signs of the times. He is content to remark that the age in which he is privileged to live

[1] "Ubi religio, ubi veneratio majoribus debita a vobis?" (*Apol.*, vi.)

[2] "Cave nutrices et gerulas" (Jerome, Ep. liv. 5); "nequitiam servulorum" (liv. 6).

[3] See the elaborate defence of the slaves in Salvianus (*De Gubernatione Dei*, iv.).

is "a friend to virtue."[1] He is more capable of giving an opinion on the proper site of the statue of Victory than of bringing victory to the State. Although almost within view of the catastrophe, he is busy arranging gladiatorial shows and combats of wild beasts, in order to mark most fittingly the entrance of his son into public life. When the news comes that slaves are to be enrolled in the army, he is more troubled by the fact that rich men will thus be deprived of their servants than by the disastrous condition of the army. Not many years before the sack of Rome he urges his friends to send him from every quarter of the globe the kind of menagerie which most impressed the Roman people. And when the great spectacle is in progress he urges his relatives to hasten to Rome, because two of the crocodiles are still breathing and he cannot guarantee that they will survive much longer.[2] But the man's real character is perhaps best seen in his burst of indignation at the fact that the brave Saxons, whom he had reserved as gladiators, had agreed to strangle each other rather than appear before the Roman people. In his misfortune the statesman consoles himself with the reflection that, according to Socrates, it is all one to a good man whether his best laid schemes succeed or fail.[3] If Symmachus is to be taken as a typical statesman of his age, could Rome have been saved by futile creatures like these? When we turn to Jerome we find an utterly new temperament. Symmachus could never have written the sympathetic letter to a Roman soldier in which Jerome reminds a brave man that a good and great heart may be found under a military cloak.[4] In his concern for the strength of the Roman army, Jerome,

[1] Ep. iii. 43.

[2] "Duos (crocodillos) etiam nunc spirantes in vestrum differemus adventum, licet eos cibi abstentia longum vivere posse non spondeat" (Ep. vi. 43).

[3] II. 46.

[4] Ep. cxlv.

indeed, betrays a somewhat charming inconsistency. He is a practical man struggling to adjust the needs of the age with the ideals of his creed. He is not content to point out that Roman vices have made the barbarians strong, but declares that national sins have undermined the vigour of the Roman army.[1] He who lived to see the fulfilment of the prophecy of the Book of Revelation concerning Rome is still anxious that the city should present the boldest front. His excitement increased when he began to understand that she must no longer fight for glory but for safety.[2] And when at last Alaric is at the gates Jerome is indignant that the city is to be saved not with the help of the sword but by means of an indemnity.[3] Patriotism could hardly be more forcibly expressed than in his question, What is safe if Rome perishes?[4] This no doubt was also the kind of spirit which animated a great man like Stilicho, but it had become rare in Rome. And the Romans, like the Athenians, got rid of their great man two years before the date when they most needed him.[5] As if to illustrate the saying of an early Roman poet that fortune makes men stupid when she wishes to destroy them, a paralysis had overtaken the ruling class. In the case of Rome, as in the case of Babylon, the moment of crisis was the moment when the weakest man was on the throne, and once again the combination of inner and of outer causes of ruin was complete. Jerome wonders why calamity visited a State whose rulers were now Christians.[6] But if rulers happen to be Christians and imbeciles? When Rome was sacked her emperor was at Ravenna feeding his poultry. He was told by one of

[1] "Nostris vitiis Romanus superatur exercitus" (lx. 17).

[2] "Quis hoc credet? . . . Romam in gremio suo non pro gloria, sed pro salute pugnare?" (cxxiii. 17).

[3] Ep. cxxvii. 12.

[4] Ep. cxxiii. 17.

[5] Stilicho was beheaded A.D. 408.

[6] Ep. cxxiii. 17.

his servants that Rome had been seized. "Impossible," said Honorius; "she has just been feeding out of my own hands." For he had a favourite hen called "Rome," and she had the chief place in his thoughts.[1]

46. In the effort to discover the reasons for the disappearance of Rome as a World State it has been often supposed that she suffered from maladies peculiar to herself. Since, however, a similar process of development and of decay had been already consummated by the States which had preceded her in the sovereignty of the world, it seems more reasonable to believe that fundamental causes at work in all of them must account for this repetition of history. Some writers have discovered grave defects in the inner organisation of the Empire, and in a system which involved the utter isolation of the throne. There was no genuine interaction among the component parts of the social organism—or, rather, the State was no genuine organism at all. Opposition was carried on not by constitutional means but by intrigue. Public opinion did not exist, or it manifested itself only irregularly in the humours of the amphitheatre. Within three and a half centuries thirty-one out of forty-nine emperors were assassinated. But this dangerous deadlock in the political system was not peculiar to Rome, and it would be easy to find an analogous situation in the history of other States. Babylon suffered similar oscillations in the governing power, and her dynasties rose and fell. In fact, the same political and social phenomena persistently appear like recurring decimals in all ancient nations; but it is in their social system that the most organic factors in their evolution and their dissolution are to be found. The economic basis of all of them was the same, and that basis was the slave-market. If we might venture to generalise on so complex a subject,

[1] Procopius, *De Bello Vandalico*, i. 2.

we should say that if slaves formed the Wealth of Nations they formed also the Nemesis. And just as in the modern world the fortunes of a community depend on the adjustment of capital and labour, in antiquity the economic situation was profoundly influenced by the adjustment of capital and slavery. So far as its own interests were concerned, labour in antiquity was wholly passive. Given a great and continuous supply of slaves, the capitalist carried on his work uncontrolled. The slaves were his automata, and, indeed, they constituted the machinery of the ancient world. There may never be a genuine equation between capital and labour, but in antiquity there was not even the pretence of such a thing. Power was wholly on the one side, and the result was a dreadful sense of strain in the industries and the commerce of the State. It would, of course, be useless to pretend to lay bare every step in that silent and prolonged collusion of destructive forces which undermined those nations, or to attempt to calculate the amount of damage attributable to each single cause. The causes were not single at all, but intricately entangled. When we remember that to the activity of impersonal and economic factors we must add the conscious interference of strong and of weak statesmen in the affairs of States, we see that we are face to face with a problem of remarkable complexity. In the long cycle which separates the organisation from the disorganisation of the State the character of the people undergoes innumerable changes. In the evolution of a State, as of a star, chaos precedes cosmos. But when cosmos comes the chaotic elements are often only put to sleep, and it appears to be the decree of destiny that they must again awake. We have seen in these imperfect sketches that communities started their corporate life with a great store of energy, which expressed itself in a vital religion, a vital agriculture, a vital art,

and, above all, in a vital military activity which resulted in a wide extension of the primitive area. The military activity was the dominant factor in fixing the amount of the expansion, in guarding the new boundaries, and in diverting, by compulsion, the commerce of surrounding States towards a new centre. Meanwhile, as wealth flowed in, a struggle for its equal distribution began within the State's own borders, and it became articulate in frequent and violent oscillations of the body politic. The national self-consciousness was now permanently divided, or it was united only in face of an invader. Sometimes, as in the case of Babylon, Greece, and Rome, when the enemy's rule offered advantages new groupings and secessions took place. Within the State itself no amount of political change gave genuine peace. The community had become lop-sided; power and property had fallen into the hands of the more energetic citizens, while hunger and misery became the hereditary burden of the masses. But both of those opposed factors produced the same result, for luxury undermined the virility of the rich, and poverty undermined the strength and character of the poor, and slavery broke the spirit of the working class. In its collective capacity the State had been living on its potential energy, which became gradually exhausted because it was unrenewed. After the great process of addition of national wealth and power came the process of subtraction. The wealth that had poured in began to pour out in the purchase of superfluities, and native industry became unproductive. Although now and again a successful war was waged, the national movement was, on the whole, from activity to passivity. The greatest amount of force was congregated at the centre, and the circumference was neglected. The accumulating energy of new nations needing room went on unobserved. The vigilance at the frontiers was relaxed. Within

twenty years Jerome witnessed a momentous shrinkage in the diameter of the Roman world, and section after section of the great circle was seized. Or, if we might be allowed to vary the image, we should say that there comes a day when the State finds itself moving on an inclined plane. Sometimes, as in the case of Greece, the descent was rapid and violent. Sometimes, as in the cases of Babylon and Rome, it was prolonged, and many centuries heard the rumblings of their dilapidation. It is extremely remarkable that almost every State appears to record unconsciously these symptoms of its own decline, as, for instance, in inferior and stagnant art and literature, and above all in the loss of its religion. There is no doubt some danger in the attempt to identify the life of the State with the life of the individual, but the analogy is often striking. History has her own chapter of pathology, which allows us to see that the State, like the individual, suffers many fluctuations of health and disease between the two extremes of helplessness—childhood and old age.

47. In the long catalogue of subversive causes it is important to note the decay of political instinct which betrayed itself after the Roman Empire had been consolidated. During the reign of Tiberius the right of appointing magistrates was transferred from the people to the Senate. In other words, the entire political effort of the Republic was rendered void. And when in the reign of Caligula the right of appointment was given back to the citizens they refused to exercise their privilege, so that once more it passed to the Senate. On the other hand, it would be wrong to suppose that mere political development can save a State. In Athens and in Rome political activity was often utterly barren, and one of the lessons of history is that great social abuses go on accumulating while men talk politics.

Moreover, in Greece and in Rome class privileges had actually a political origin, and many families dated their greatness from the day when some ancestor had been *strategos* or prætor or consul, or even tribune. An aristocracy sleeps in every democracy. And it is one of the ironies of history that the people begin to look with suspicion on the men whom they have uplifted, because in a servant they begin to find a ruler. Thus the acts of one prominent character who owes his position to election may alter the whole destiny of a people and set the collective will at naught. Or, again, we may notice the growing hazards of a State in the creation of an opulent society in which military ardour gradually declines. Whereas in early Rome the burghers formed the battalions, during the Empire the army was reorganised on a mercenary basis and was separated from the people. Owing to the jealousy of the throne, senators were forbidden to be soldiers. And the Emperor Constantine carried to its logical conclusion the military policy of Augustus and caused the bodies of the soldiers to be branded like slaves as a sign that they were imperial property. But here again we see that a fighting force, however efficient, if it be detached from the nation is no proper bulwark. The victories of Stilicho and of Aetius, although brilliant, did not save a people who were content to fight by proxy and had begun to mutilate themselves in order to escape military service. Further, as a disintegrating influence we should observe the tendency of property, and especially of property in land, to become vested in a few families; and here we may repeat the bold generalisation of Pliny that the great estates (*latifundia*) were the cause of the ruin of Italy and the provinces. In contrast with all other things, wealth gravitates upwards. We can hardly measure the amount of suffering

endured by the ancient free poor, but it must have been great before it drove them into the ranks of the slaves. In a financial situation which was always precarious and confused even the rich incurred immense risks, for we hear that during the Empire taxation was enforced by torture. Again, as a sign of the national stagnation we may note that there was a return to the Asiatic system of hereditary trades and professions. A man's son was compelled to follow his father's profession, and he was forbidden to marry outside of his guild, so that we find in Rome a survival of part of the social scheme portrayed in the Laws of Manu. Amid such sterilising tendencies Italy ceased to be productive, and depended for her food supply on the labour of thousands of slaves in the harvest fields of Africa and Sicily. And in the city a worthless population waited like beggars on the imperial alms in the form of wheat, pork, oil, and wine. Like Athens, Rome had become the parasite of her subject peoples. Like Athens, too, she suffered from a deficit in men. The birth-rate steadily declined both during the Republic and the Empire. Lastly, and worst of all, she lost the art in which she had excelled—the great art of government. A strange decay of the faculty of administration had occurred since Virgil wrote that it was Rome's mission to spare the vanquished and to humble the proud. The vanquished had not been spared. The provinces were milked to death. Rome had accepted the fascinating and perilous gift of imperialism, but she had not fulfilled all its obligations. She built roads, bridges, and aqueducts throughout her provinces, but it was by the unpaid labour of provincial slaves. Each city and each village mimicked her, and reproduced even her amphitheatres, so that she extended the good and the evil of her system throughout the world. The exactions

of the provincial tax-gatherers grew more intolerable. Although it is true that, long dazzled by her prestige, the provinces clung to her till she fell, and even attacked her enemies, it is also true that they had ceased to trust her. In the fifth century they expected and they received from Goths and Huns more justice than Rome could give them. Roman citizenship, which used to be so great a prize, began to be repudiated; men feared to come under the tyranny of Roman governors, and no longer desired to be called by the Roman name.[1] A Roman subject in the camp of Attila told a Roman envoy that he would not now exchange the government of the Huns for the government of the Romans.

48. These were some of the main stages on the route of decadence. States perish by various forms of that "excess" which, as some Greek thinkers showed, is fatal to prosperous action. In the foregoing pages we thought it well, however, to concentrate our attention on that excess of power which those States displayed towards the class who created their wealth. A wholly hostile relation subsisted between capital and labour, and this permanent deadlock involved economic sterility. There was an utter absence of that co-operation without which a State remains an artificial and highly dangerous organism. A ferocious individualism, sometimes disguised as collectivism, did not scruple to dispose of human life with a recklessness which was in strange contrast with the care bestowed on inanimate property. Whereas a vast immobile population were kept continually at work in order to supply national necessities, the State's own freemen were the unemployed. And when we remember that in every State the conditions were the same, and that wars were waged for the purpose of maintaining

[1] Salvianus, v. 5. 21.

those conditions, the history of antiquity appears to be the history of centuries of stagnation and waste. Behind the glittering front of ancient civilisation we discover a dark organisation of social life, in which duties were unaccompanied by rights. Babylon, Egypt, Phœnicia, Greece, and Rome grew great by means of industrial systems which created wealth but involved the ruin of the workmen. What is the use of knowing that the Athenian fleet defeated the Persians if we do not know that without the incessant labour of the slaves in the Athenian silver mines there would have been no Athenian fleet at all? Accurate lists of kings, archons, and strategoi, consuls, proconsuls, and tribunes, will never enable us to see the unrest of those vanished States. Even their art, their literature, and their religion are lame guides, because modes of thought and of expression change and beliefs die. But labour lives. The politics of one era are scarcely intelligible to the next, but it is the continuity of human work which binds ages together. *That*, at least, is hereditary where all else fluctuates. When we remember that the economic systems of all ancient States were organised upon the same basis, and that in the hope of making that basis permanent ceaseless activity was kept up in the gold mines of Egypt, in the copper mines of Cyprus and Sinai, in the iron, salt, and sulphur mines of Persia, in European and Asiatic tin, lead, and silver mines, in Caucasian naphtha pits and ruby mines of Bactria, in the quarries of Numidia and Greece, and in the vast brickfields of Rome and Babylon, we are almost able to descry the dim masses of chained men whose labour was the creative force of antiquity. Those States appear to have been incapable of profiting by each other's social and economic errors. Each of them reproduced, even in detail, the same scheme, and they all died bankrupt.

After all, in spite of the imposing fabric of Roman law, the great imperial experiment of the West had left the mass of mankind in the same social and moral condition as the great imperial experiment of the East. It was not merely a mystic, it was a profound and doubtless a thoroughly conscious political instinct which made the writer of the Book of Revelation identify the rôle of Rome with the rôle of Babylon. Whether he had or had not seen Rome, he had seized her great and tragic meaning in the history of the world. His wild language is the language of contemporary suffering. It is remarkable that at the end of the great inventory of the perishing wealth of Rome—gold and silver, pearls and purple, fine linen and silk and ivory, marble and brass, horses and chariots—the writer of that astonishing book mentions, as the climax of her riches, her slaves. And it is even more remarkable that when Alaric at the gates of Rome was dictating the terms of capitulation he demanded, as an indispensable condition, the instant delivery of those "barbarian slaves" (*mancipia barbara*) who at the moment were impatiently awaiting his arrival. The slaves formed the international elements in ancient civilisation, but wherever they went they carried the contagion of national sterility. In Rome the day of amelioration came too late both for economics and for justice. Let it not be said that isolated instances of more humane relations between employer and employed really mitigated the effects of so widespread a tyranny. Let it not be said that the creation of the Roman *collegia*, a kind of trades clubs composed mainly of freedmen working to provide an income for their former lords, made any fundamental change in an economic system already consolidated by centuries of custom and tradition. A master sometimes spoke of a slave as of a son, and reserved a place for him in the family sepulchre,

and a youth raised a monument to his nurse. These are welcome facts. There were even cases in which gladiators refused to exchange their calling. But such facts are insignificant, because they are not typical. The pressure of the system on nameless multitudes is seen in the insurrections which, although few and in the end abortive, sometimes endangered the State. According to Tacitus, Rome suffered from perpetual anxiety in case of a revolution among the slaves. But how feeble their resistance was when it was measured against the might of the Roman people is proved by the six thousand crosses (and on every cross a slave) which marked the termination of the revolt of the gladiators. If Rome was, on the whole, seldom troubled by that dangerous rolling of the ballast of the State which perturbs the modern world, the reason was that her labouring population, isolated and disorganised, were kept in chains. If we study ancient nations from within, and penetrate behind the mere foreground of their glory, we discover a society governed by intimidation. If we had a telescope to bring them near we should find all of them resting on impossible foundations. Their combined rivalries, like the rivalries of modern States, pressed most heavily on the poorest class, and involved an immense but futile activity. It was deeply significant that although Rome raised a statue to Quiet, she placed it outside the walls. We visit her ruins, but we forget the buried indignation which lies beneath them. Not long ago the Esquiline cemetery was excavated, and there was discovered a pit one thousand feet long and three hundred feet deep. It was an ancient burial-ground for slaves, who were thrown into it along with the carcasses of animals and the refuse of the city. If it be true that methods of human burial indicate the value which is placed on human life, these Roman slave-pits are in themselves sufficient to indicate

the spirit that lay behind Roman civilisation. The collective tyranny was reproduced in the acts of the single citizen. His voracious egoism was expressed in the boast of Roman capitalists that their own domains and their own slaves supplied them with almost every article that they needed, and made them independent of the fluctuations of the markets. That is the picture of a society breaking up. It is for such reasons that if the decline of an empire is, as Gibbon called it, "the most awful scene in the history of mankind," it is a scene which cannot find its ultimate explanation in the narrow formulæ of politics and economics. For a nation is a collection of individuals whose actions contain elements of surprise, and are incalculable, and the sum of their characters is the national conscience. Hence the national conscience may vary from century to century. On the private tombs of the Romans there have been discovered dedications to Nemesis. But we cannot measure every step of that long and insidious process of deterioration in their private character which at last caused her name to be written, with deeper meaning, on the Tomb of the State.

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